

THE AMERICAN Legion

The magazine for a strong America

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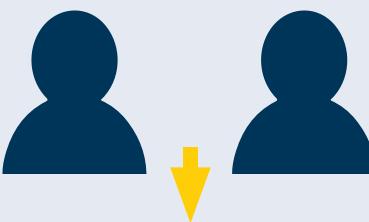
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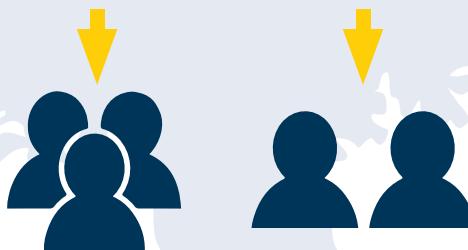
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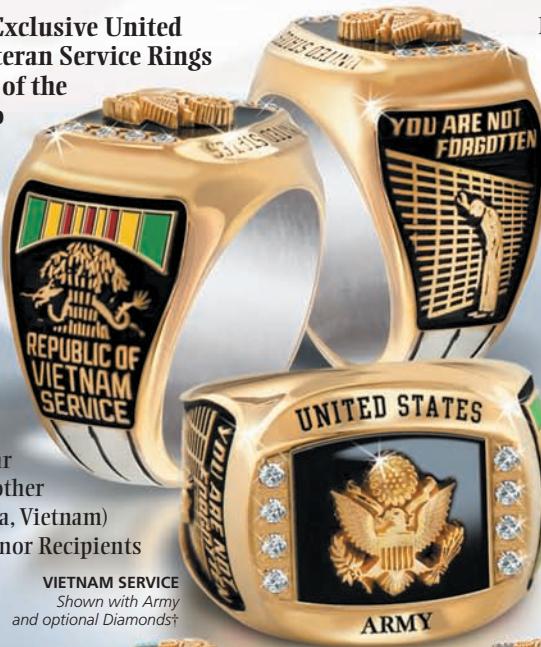


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contents

July 2015 • Vol. 179, No. 1



ON THE COVER

22 The Cannabis Question

Some veterans say medical marijuana could reduce painkiller addictions and curb the suicide rate.

Is it a crime or a cure? *By Ken Olsen*

Cover photo by Lucas Carter

32 A Level of Concern

California's water crisis demands a choice between unlimited growth and a sustainable future. *By David Carle*

38 'A Big Opportunity'

Commissioner James Whitfield says Legionnaires have a part to play in marking the Great War's centennial. *By Matt Grills*

44 Road Warriors

The Legion Riders keep rolling as Legacy Scholarship funds grow.

46 'The Last Thing We Want to Happen'

Fifty years ago, the United States sent troops to prevent a communist takeover in the Dominican Republic.

By Alan W. Dowd

50 Windows of Opportunity

Know your Medicare deadlines, so you don't end up with higher premiums or coverage gaps. *By J.J. Montanaro*

RED, WHITE AND WHEELS

Flanked by American Legion Riders fresh from the Run to the Thunder event in Fairfax, Va., E. Bruce Heilman leads the 2015 Memorial Day parade in Washington.

Heilman, longtime chancellor of the University of Richmond in Virginia and a Marine Corps veteran, traveled 6,000 miles on his motorcycle to bring attention to the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. [Read more on page 52.](#)

Watch a video:  www.legion.org/riders

Photo by Andrea Dickerson

5 Vet Voice

8 Commander's Message

10 I Am The American Legion

12 Big Issues

14 Living Well

20 Veterans Update

52 Rapid Fire

66 Comrades

68 Parting Shots

The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.3 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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'Why Memorial Day'

I thoroughly enjoyed this article (May). As an Army veteran and American Legion member, I am always amazed by the interesting articles every month.

Growing up, I knew that Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. was one of our country's great Supreme Court justices, but did not know the real man. This speech gave me insight into his thinking process, as well as the integrity of the man and of his comrades-in-arms who fought the Civil War. By all accounts, the people of the South and the North should by this time respect each other's views of the past and move on. But that is not the case, as the history of the war is written differently by each side and is still contested in the minds of the people today. Lincoln's "with malice toward none" was not to be, due to his assassination. I wish every living American was able to read Holmes' speech to understand the meaning of honor, integrity and country.

— John Reichert, La Grange Park, Ill.

The soldier who fell in the wilderness was Holmes' best friend, Henry Livermore Abbott. The later reference to the "solitary horseman" was William F. Bartlett, another friend and Harvard classmate. By reading more about Abbott and Bartlett, one can gain more valuable insights about these remarkable Civil War heroes.

— Peter Murray, Brookfield, Wis.

'America at War'

Thank you for listing the battles the United States has been in, and in chronological order (May). I took these pages and put them with my history books of the city, county, state and World War II, which includes letters written by family who fought in that war.

— Gerald Williams, Logansport, Ind.

Alan W. Dowd fails to mention Cold War U.S. military deaths in his article as he does for America's other wars and conflicts. As a Cold War warrior, I feel that many are perhaps ignorant of casualties during the longest conflict in U.S. history. Serving in Europe during this protracted fight was far from a cold war for me. It was a daily test of resolve and stress to face the possibility of a war with the Soviet Union along the border of Eastern Europe.

I find it a slap in the face to see no mention of the sacrifice of those who died to keep the peace in a time of constant threats and saber-rattling on both sides; I could have been among those deaths.

— Edward B. Lapotsky, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany

'More Than Names'

Thanks to the article by Ken Olsen (May), I just renewed an acquaintance with Lt. Janie Dresser (Schaut) of the 93rd Evacuation Hospital operating room. She was among the best of the OR nurses. Please give my best regards to Mrs. Schaut.

—Howard E. Kinnetz, Waterloo, Iowa

'Leadership: America's Missing Ingredient'

After reading the commentary by 2nd Lt. Thomas N. Wheatley and retired Gen. Tommy Franks (May), I felt a need to post my reflection. Both Franks and Wheatley are leaders. I say this without any equivocation. They have been trained to protect and defend our union in times of war and as directed by our Congress and instructed through the office of the president who functions in the position of commander in chief. Should they violate their oath, they would be subjecting themselves to the harsh consequences of courts-martial in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

There is no comparison, nor should there be any, of political leadership in a representative form of government to military leadership. Those elected to office are obligated under oath to also protect and defend the Constitution. No more and no less. We have not sent them to the District of Columbia to do what they think is best for us, but rather to execute and uphold what we the people determine is best for us in compliance with the rule of law as enumerated in the Constitution.

By electing so-called leaders to determine what is good for we the people, we abdicate our responsibility and establish the pathway for the oligarchy we see today in lieu of the representative form of government established by the founding fathers.

Those elected are shielded and are not subjected to the pains and penalties to be suffered by the military under the UCMJ. If they fail to abide by their oath, the unintended consequence could possibly be censure, impeachment and loss of seat by not being re-elected. Regardless, they are still assured a pension and health care for life.

In my humble opinion, I suggest we cease and desist from referring to those we elect to office as leaders, as they are our chosen representatives. To do otherwise only contributes to the continuing demise of that union established by the founding fathers.

—Stewart Skrill, Ruskin, Fla.

USPS and veteran jobs

Andrea Dickerson's excellent article on the U.S. Postal Service's job cuts (Rapid Fire, May) reminds us how fragile our economy really is. It would be a tragic loss if the postal service as we know it had to make major changes. However, what we don't see — and I've gotten this from a former USPS employee — is the incredibly generous retirement system, and I use that term conservatively.

Unfortunately, those kinds of things are already "written in stone," as it were, and can't be easily changed. But the USPS has

long needed to get itself in order, the fat cats refusing to see the handwriting on the wall. Our service personnel take yet another hit.

—Jon Joyce, Santa Maria, Calif.

The article correctly points out the negative impact on veterans' jobs and mail delivery that the USPS cuts have had and will have. I wish, however, that the 2006 act passed by Congress — mandating that the USPS pre-fund future pension benefits to the tune of 75 years' worth within a five-year period — had been mentioned.

The USPS is thus required by law to put billions of dollars aside for benefits to be paid as far out as 2090. This legislation, in my opinion, was passed as an attempt to put USPS out of business and let the "private sector" take over. How much do you think a first-class postage stamp would cost then? What cronies would reap the benefits of a private postal service? Which members of Congress would benefit?

—Bob Molessa, Tucson, Ariz.

Sacred duty of honor guard

The article on Betty Gonzales of St. Louis Service Women's Post 404 (I Am The American Legion, May) was truly heartwarming to me. I am a 94-year-old World War II Army veteran, and up until several years ago, I did volunteer work at the local library and then a hospice program. God bless Betty, and I wish her many more years to help veterans.

—Lillian Sprague, Lincoln, Calif.

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Boys State, Boys Nation transform lives

Former President Bill Clinton and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker might not agree on many issues, but they share one position that transcends party politics: an admiration for The American Legion's Boys Nation program.

Walker, who attended Badger Boys State and advanced to Boys Nation in 1985, called the experience "transformational." His visit to Washington 30 years ago made an impression that remains with him today.

"Seeing those veterans, being at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, being at Arlington, being on the Mall – doing all the different things we did as part of the week of Boys Nation – reinforced to me more than just government and politics, which is obviously part of it, but really the public service," Walker recently told The American Legion. "Seeing these veterans who were so committed to making sure that patriotism lived on to the next generation was a tremendous inspiration."

Clinton had a similar experience in 1963. "That week had a profound impact on me," the 42nd president told the 2013 Boys Nation session. "I was also deeply inspired to pursue life in public service. Of course, I couldn't know then what jobs I'd have or when I would be elected or what I would be elected to or whether I would even be elected. I did know that I wanted to spend my life being of service."

Boys Nation is more than a training ground for future politicians. Other distinguished program alumni include Michael Jordan, Jon Bon Jovi, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Brokaw, Garth Brooks, Neil Armstrong, James Gandolfini, Phil Jackson and Robert Griffin III.

Indeed, the program often described as "a week that shapes a lifetime" has had a remarkable influence on this country since two Illinois Legionnaires established the first Boys State in 1935.

Originally created as a patriotic alternative to the socialism-inspired Young Pioneer Camps of the 1930s, Hayes Kennedy and Harold Card envisioned an environment for young men that would educate them on the importance of our two-party system of government.

That first class of 217 high school boys gathered at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield to learn how to operate a city, county and state government. They conducted elections and passed laws. In short, they learned the value of good citizenship.

Before long, the program attracted national interest and spread throughout other departments in The American Legion. Today 49 of 50 states operate Boys State programs. The American Legion Auxiliary runs similar Girls State and Girls Nation programs to instill patriotism and leadership in young women. These have a list of impressive graduates, too, including Janet Napolitano, Jane Pauley and Ann Richards.

As national commander, I will have the privilege of meeting the Boys Nation class of 2015 this month. While these young men will no doubt have memorable experiences as they meet members of Congress and tour our nation's capital, it is not what Boys Nation does for its participants that is most exciting. Rather, it is knowing that we're part of the forging of the next generation of American leaders.



National Commander
Michael D. Helm

MEMORANDA

BOYS NATION, JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS COVERAGE

July is a busy month for American Legion youth programs: Boys Nation will be conducted July 17-25 in Washington, and the Junior 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship will be July 21-25 in Colorado Springs, Colo. Find daily coverage at www.legion.org.

SAMSUNG SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE

Applications for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship are due to National Headquarters by Aug. 1. They are submitted to program staff upon participants' arrival to Boys State or Girls State.

• www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung

#MYUSFLAG

The American Legion's call to social media users to share photos or thoughts on what the U.S. flag means to them continues.

Selected submissions will become part of a multimedia tribute that will include a collectible American Legion Centennial bookazine – "Indivisible: The Story of Our Flag" – and Web platform. Post on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #MyUSFlag, or to Pinterest.

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MIKE KIRCHOFF

Mike Kirchoff has been active in several fraternal and veterans organizations: Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS, Moose. But "there's something special about The American Legion that makes you want to get involved," he says.

He believes in the Legion so much, in fact, that he helped start Post 392 in Panama City, Fla., which is succeeding at attracting young veterans and active-duty personnel. One of the big draws is the American Legion Riders – a group about which Kirchoff is passionate. He's been a member of the Riders' national advisory committee since 2013 and has participated in every Legacy Run as a road captain.

"The American Legion Riders bring youth and energy into The American Legion," he says. "This is where you get your young kids. We're all veterans. But having motorcycles and Legion Riders and that comradeship with them is a whole unique thread."

BRANCH OF SERVICE

Air Force (1965-1968), Air Force Reserve (1968-1987)

MOS Crew chief

RANK Chief master sergeant

AMERICAN LEGION POST

Paul W. Airey Post 392,
Panama City, Fla.

YEARS IN THE LEGION 14

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- Post adjutant (2014-present)



Photo by Lucas Carter



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Magnificat II and studied the escapement, balance wheel and the rotor. He remarked on the detailed guilloche face, gilt winding crown, and the crocodile-embossed leather band. He was intrigued by the three interior dials for day, date, and 24-hour moon phases. He estimated that this fine timepiece would cost over \$2,500. We all smiled and told him that the Stauer price was less than \$90. He was stunned. We felt like we had accomplished our task. A truly magnificent watch at a truly magnificent price!

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Pass the Republican budget



SUPPORT

Rep. Todd Rokita, R-Ind.

■ Rokita is vice chairman of the House Budget Committee.

I believe national defense might be the most important function of government, and that the sacrifices of the courageous individuals who serve in our armed forces must be recognized. That is why we, through the federal government, have made many promises to veterans over the years – promises that must be kept.

Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic mismanagement and gross negligence at VA, veterans are rightly questioning our commitment to these promises. We owe it to these men and women to provide timely and appropriate access to health-care services. That is why our Republican budget supports making VA more transparent, accountable and efficient.

We must also acknowledge our budgetary environment. Veterans health-care spending has increased 130 percent in the past 10 years. Spending on education benefits, disability compensation and expansion of pension eligibility has increased 144 percent.

While these trends certainly are concerning, they speak to a larger spending problem – one that has resulted in an \$18 trillion national debt. Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted in 2011 that debt is the biggest threat to U.S. national security. His words now seem prescient as our ability to keep the promises to our veterans depends largely upon our ability to control our debt – a debt driven by mandatory, auto-pilot spending programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. If these programs are reformed for the next generation (56 and younger) and better managed – the focus of the Republican budget – there will be more resources to keep the promises made to all Americans, including our veterans.



OPPOSE

Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.

■ Van Hollen is the ranking member of the House Budget Committee.

Recent funding shortfalls have left the Department of Veterans Affairs unprepared to meet the demands of a new generation of returning veterans. Timely access to quality health care and the ongoing claims backlog have been pervasive problems. To make matters worse, the government shutdown in the fall of 2013 slowed the processing of benefits claims.

Unfortunately, the Republican budget makes it even harder for VA to provide the services and care we owe to our veterans.

It reduces veterans funding below the commander in chief's request by \$19 billion over 10 years, straining VA as it tries to meet growing demand. Worse, the GOP budget includes more than \$700 billion in unspecified cuts to non-defense programs that could further squeeze VA. In shortchanging VA without asking a single special interest to give up a tax code loophole, it is clear that the Republican budget protects the wealthy few at the expense of everyone and everything else, including our veterans.

The Democratic budget I've put forward eliminates the sequester and increases funding for veterans programs by 8 percent over current-year funding, enabling VA to improve the speed and quality of health and mental health care. My budget also allows for increased funding for vital programs outside the VA health-care system, and it extends advance funding to all of VA's discretionary programs so that veterans benefits are protected in the unfortunate case of another government shutdown.

I am proud to stand behind a budget that honors the sacrifices our veterans and their families have made in the service of our country.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable (name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121

The Honorable (name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA

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Not-so-diet soda

A new study suggests a link between diet sodas and bigger waistlines in seniors, HealthDay reports.

The study focused on more than 700 people 65 or older, tracking their eating habits and health status for an average of nine years. Those who never drank diet soda saw their waistlines grow by 0.8 inches over the course of the study. The increase was 1.8 inches for occasional drinkers and 3 inches for those who drank diet sodas every day.

Researchers were quick to point out that the diet soda may not be the cause of weight gain. Continuing poor dietary habits or overeating due to a feeling of saving calories may also contribute. Also, the drinks' sweeteners themselves could be contributing to weight gain by disrupting the body's sugar processing, making people more hungry, HealthDay adds.



Media Bakery

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

WHEN PAIN DOESN'T STOP



Media Bakery

BY JUDITH HURLEY

Twist an ankle or smash your thumb with a hammer, and the sudden burst of pain grabs your full attention. Those pain signals, while hardly pleasant, have a critical function. They tell you that something new and dangerous has occurred and prompt you to do something about it. But what happens when pain signals last longer than they should – when they keep firing for weeks, even years?

More than 100 million Americans suffer from chronic pain, often defined as persistent pain lasting more than six months. Chronic pain is commonly caused by a herniated disc, osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis or another medical condition. Or it may develop following surgery, an injury or whiplash from a car accident. Sometimes there is no underlying health condition or injury – just the pain itself, as with chronic headaches or nerve pain.

Persistent pain often cannot be cured, but a variety of treatments can help. If you are coping with chronic pain, here are some things you should know:

Pain medication might not be the answer. While pain medication can reduce the severity of pain, long-term use of opiate pain relievers such as oxycodone can lead to worrisome or dangerous side effects. And for some, pain medication actually worsens their pain over time. According to the American Chronic Pain Association, it's realistic to expect partial – but not full – relief from pain medication.

Meditation, relaxation and other non-drug therapies help.

Chronic pain can change certain chemicals and structures in the brain, leading to mood changes. People with chronic pain often experience stress, anxiety and depression, which in turn can increase physical pain. Fortunately, non-drug therapies to bolster mind-body health are now an accepted part of pain management. Meditation, guided imagery, hypnosis and relaxation methods are often taught at pain management centers.

See **PAIN** on page 17

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¹⁸Subject to eligibility. Restrictions apply.



Talk to your doctor about

ANORO[®] ELLIPTA[®]

(umeclidinium 62.5 mcg and vilanterol 25 mcg inhalation powder)

Important Safety Information, cont'd

(serious side effects, cont'd)

reaction: rash; hives; swelling of the face, mouth, and tongue; breathing problems.

- **effects on your heart:** increased blood pressure; a fast and/or irregular heartbeat; chest pain

- **effects on your nervous system:** tremor; nervousness

- **new or worsened eye problems, including acute narrow-angle glaucoma.**

Acute narrow-angle glaucoma can cause permanent loss of vision if not treated. Symptoms of acute narrow-angle glaucoma may include: eye pain or discomfort; nausea or vomiting; blurred vision; seeing halos or bright colors around lights; red eyes. If you have these symptoms, call your doctor right away before taking another dose.

- **urinary retention.** People who take ANORO may develop new or worse urinary retention. Symptoms of urinary retention may include: difficulty urinating; painful urination; urinating frequently; urination in a weak stream or drips. If you have these symptoms of urinary retention, stop taking ANORO and call your doctor right away before taking another dose.

- **changes in laboratory blood levels,** including high levels of blood sugar (hyperglycemia) and low levels of potassium (hypokalemia)

• **Common side effects of ANORO include:** sore throat; sinus infection; lower respiratory infection; common cold symptoms; constipation; diarrhea; pain in your arms or legs; muscle spasms; neck pain; chest pain.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information for ANORO ELLIPTA on the following pages.

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²This is not health insurance.



GSK for you

If you don't have prescription coverage and can't afford your medicines, visit GSKforyou.com or call 1-866-GSK-FOR-U (1-866-475-3678)



ANORO ELLIPTA was developed in collaboration with Theravance

ANORO[®] ELLIPTA[®]

(umeclidinium 62.5 mcg and
vilanterol 25 mcg inhalation powder)

BRIEF SUMMARY

Read the Medication Guide that comes with ANORO ELLIPTA before you start using it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This summary does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about ANORO ELLIPTA?

ANORO ELLIPTA is only approved for use in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). ANORO ELLIPTA is NOT approved for use in asthma.

ANORO ELLIPTA can cause serious side effects, including:

- People with asthma who take long-acting beta₂-adrenergic agonist (LABA) medicines, such as vilanterol (one of the medicines in ANORO ELLIPTA), have an increased risk of death from asthma problems.**
- It is not known if LABA medicines, such as vilanterol (one of the medicines in ANORO ELLIPTA), increase the risk of death in people with COPD.**
- Call your healthcare provider if breathing problems worsen over time while using ANORO ELLIPTA.** You may need different treatment.
- Get emergency medical care if:**
 - your breathing problems worsen quickly
 - you use your rescue inhaler, but it does not relieve your breathing problems.

What is ANORO ELLIPTA?

ANORO ELLIPTA combines an anticholinergic, umeclidinium, and a LABA medicine, vilanterol.

Anticholinergic and LABA medicines help the muscles around the airways in your lungs stay relaxed to prevent symptoms such as wheezing, cough, chest tightness, and shortness of breath. These symptoms can happen when the muscles around the airways tighten. This makes it hard to breathe.

ANORO ELLIPTA is a prescription medicine used to treat COPD. COPD is a chronic lung disease that includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both. ANORO ELLIPTA is used long term as 1 inhalation, 1 time each day, to improve symptoms of COPD for better breathing.

- ANORO ELLIPTA is not for use to treat sudden symptoms of COPD.** Always have a rescue inhaler (an inhaled, short-

acting bronchodilator) with you to treat sudden symptoms. If you do not have a rescue inhaler, contact your healthcare provider to have one prescribed for you.

- ANORO ELLIPTA is not for the treatment of asthma. It is not known if ANORO ELLIPTA is safe and effective in people with asthma.**
- ANORO ELLIPTA should not be used in children. It is not known if ANORO ELLIPTA is safe and effective in children.

Who should not use ANORO ELLIPTA?

Do not use ANORO ELLIPTA if you:

- have a severe allergy to milk proteins. Ask your healthcare provider if you are not sure.
- are allergic to umeclidinium, vilanterol, or any of the ingredients in ANORO ELLIPTA. See "What are the ingredients in ANORO ELLIPTA?" on next page for a complete list of ingredients.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using ANORO ELLIPTA?

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your health conditions, including if you:

- have heart problems
- have high blood pressure
- have seizures
- have thyroid problems
- have diabetes
- have liver problems
- have eye problems such as glaucoma. ANORO ELLIPTA may make your glaucoma worse.
- have prostate or bladder problems, or problems passing urine. ANORO ELLIPTA may make these problems worse.
- are allergic to any of the ingredients in ANORO ELLIPTA, any other medicines, or food products. See "What are the ingredients in ANORO ELLIPTA?" on next page for a complete list of ingredients.
- have any other medical conditions
- are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. It is not known if ANORO ELLIPTA may harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding. It is not known if the medicines in ANORO ELLIPTA pass into your milk and if they can harm your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. ANORO ELLIPTA and certain other medicines may interact with each other. This may cause serious side effects.

Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- anticholinergics (including tiotropium, ipratropium, aclidinium)
- atropine

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I use ANORO ELLIPTA?

Read the step-by-step instructions for using ANORO ELLIPTA at the end of the Medication Guide.

- Do not use ANORO ELLIPTA unless your healthcare provider has taught you how to use the inhaler and you understand how to use it correctly.**
- Use ANORO ELLIPTA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to use it. **Do not use ANORO ELLIPTA more often than prescribed.**
- Use 1 inhalation of ANORO ELLIPTA 1 time each day. Use ANORO ELLIPTA at the same time each day.
- If you miss a dose of ANORO ELLIPTA, take it as soon as you remember. Do not take more than 1 inhalation each day. Take your next dose at your usual time. Do not take 2 doses at one time.
- If you take too much ANORO ELLIPTA, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away if you have any unusual symptoms, such as worsening shortness of breath, chest pain, increased heart rate, or shakiness.
- Do not use other medicines that contain a LABA or an anticholinergic for any reason.** Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if any of your other medicines are LABA or anticholinergic medicines.
- Do not stop using ANORO ELLIPTA unless told to do so by your healthcare provider because your symptoms might get worse. Your healthcare provider will change your medicines as needed.
- ANORO ELLIPTA does not relieve sudden symptoms.** Always have a rescue inhaler with you to treat sudden symptoms. If you do not have a rescue inhaler, call your healthcare provider to have one prescribed for you.
- Call your healthcare provider or get medical care right away if:
 - your breathing problems get worse
 - you need to use your rescue inhaler more often than usual

(continued on next page)



- your rescue inhaler does not work as well to relieve your symptoms

What are the possible side effects with ANORO ELLIPTA?

ANORO ELLIPTA can cause serious side effects, including:

- See “What is the most important information I should know about ANORO ELLIPTA?”
- sudden breathing problems immediately after inhaling your medicine
- serious allergic reactions. Call your healthcare provider or get emergency medical care if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:
 - rash
 - hives
 - swelling of the face, mouth, and tongue
 - breathing problems
- effects on your heart
 - increased blood pressure
 - a fast and/or irregular heartbeat
 - chest pain
- effects on your nervous system
 - tremor
 - nervousness
- new or worsened eye problems, including acute narrow-angle glaucoma. Acute narrow-angle glaucoma can cause permanent loss of vision if not treated. Symptoms of acute narrow-angle glaucoma may include:
 - eye pain or discomfort
 - nausea or vomiting
 - blurred vision
 - seeing halos or bright colors around lights
 - red eyes

If you have these symptoms, call your doctor right away before taking another dose.

- urinary retention. People who take ANORO ELLIPTA may develop new or worse urinary retention. Symptoms of urinary retention may include:
 - difficulty urinating
 - painful urination
 - urinating frequently
 - urination in a weak stream or drips

If you have these symptoms of urinary retention, stop taking ANORO ELLIPTA

and call your doctor right away before taking another dose.

- changes in laboratory blood levels, including high levels of blood sugar (hyperglycemia) and low levels of potassium (hypokalemia)

Common side effects of ANORO ELLIPTA include:

- sore throat
- sinus infection
- lower respiratory infection
- common cold symptoms
- constipation
- diarrhea
- pain in your arms or legs
- muscle spasms
- neck pain
- chest pain

Tell your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the side effects with ANORO ELLIPTA. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What are the ingredients in ANORO ELLIPTA?

Active ingredients: umeclidinium, vilanterol

Inactive ingredients: lactose monohydrate (contains milk proteins), magnesium stearate

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for additional information about ANORO ELLIPTA. You can also contact the company that makes ANORO ELLIPTA (toll free) at 1-888-825-5249 or at www.myANORO.com.

ANORO and ELLIPTA are registered trademarks of the GSK group of companies.

ANORO ELLIPTA was developed in collaboration with Theravance .



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Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

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PAIN continued from page 14

Insomnia worsens chronic pain.

Many don't realize that lack of sleep can ramp up the sensation of pain, creating a vicious cycle of pain, sleep deprivation and more pain. Pain experts say that improving sleep is crucial to breaking the cycle, so talking with a doctor about any sleep problems is important. An evaluation by a sleep specialist to check for disorders such as sleep apnea is sometimes necessary, too. And don't overlook sleep habits like a regular waking-and-sleeping pattern.

High-tech approaches are making inroads. Researchers have been learning more about how the nervous system and brain interact to create pain sensations, and their insights have led to some life-changing treatments, including electrical devices and implanted drug pumps.

Finding relief from chronic pain is seldom straightforward, and it's unlikely to come from a single medication or treatment. But the right blend of approaches can make a world of difference.

Judith Hurley is a freelance writer specializing in health and medicine.

Facts on facial fractures

According to the *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*, the demographics of those suffering fractures to the face and jaws are changing.

A study looked at data on incident causes and patient ages from a Cleveland hospital over two six-year periods 20 years apart: 1984-1990 and 2004-2010. There's a marked difference.

Fractures due to falls



3.6 percent to 22.1 percent
(fractures due to assaults and auto crashes decreased, while falls are more common in the elderly)

The age of patients



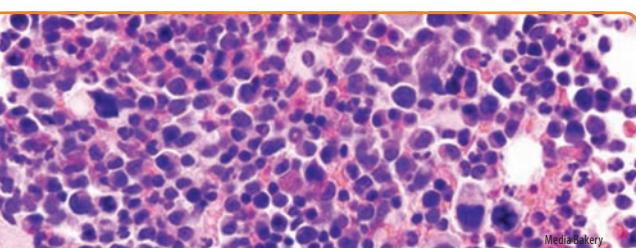
21 to 40
(6.1 percent to 35.3 percent)



41 to 65
(13.1 percent to 35.4 percent)



66 and older
(0.2 percent to 14.5 percent)



Media Bakery

Essential thrombocythemia a concern for Vietnam vets

As research advances, the list of diseases presumed by VA to be caused by exposure to the Agent Orange defoliant has grown. So has the list of diseases suspected of it – by doctors or by Vietnam veterans themselves.

One is essential thrombocythemia (ET), which is caused by bone marrow producing too many blood platelets. This can lead to abnormal bleeding or blood clots. ET is more common in people 50 and older, and in women. The disease can be detected in a blood test; symptoms may include headaches, hearing or vision problems, and burning, tingling, redness or warmth in the hands or feet.

Vietnam War veterans who have been diagnosed with ET are encouraged to contact Barry Halem at **(727) 579-4427** or Ann Brazeau of MPN Advocacy & Education International, at **(517) 899-6889**.



Media Bakery

Tech devices linked to sleep loss

"Basking in the blue glow of iPads, smartphones and other electronic devices before bedtime could be messing up our sleep patterns more profoundly than we realize, and even affecting our long-term health," *The Washington Post* reports, citing a new study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The study was based on a simple experiment that asked one group of adults to read on an iPad for four hours before bedtime, and another group to read from "printed books in dim light" for the same amount of time before bed.

Study subjects using iPads had reduced levels of melatonin (a key hormone that helps induce sleepiness), took longer to get to sleep and spent less time in rapid eye movement sleep (considered restorative sleep). "In addition, the iPad readers reported being sleepier and less alert the following morning, even after eight hours of sleep," the *Post* reports.

"What we showed is that reading from light-emitting e-reader devices has profound biological effects," explains Charles Czeisler, head of Harvard Medical School's sleep medicine division.

The problem isn't limited to iPads, he adds. Nearly everything that produces similar blue-light emissions – including tablets, e-readers, smartphones, laptops and LED monitors – can contribute to sleep loss, which can create health problems. What the experts call "chronic suppression of melatonin" is linked to higher risk of prostate cancer, colorectal cancer and breast cancer, while persistent sleeplessness and poor sleep have been linked to obesity and diabetes.

National polling reveals that nearly 90 percent of adults and 75 percent of children have one or more electronic devices in their bedrooms.

"These devices have medical and biological effects" even though "they don't have to go through any evaluation, like a drug would, for safety and efficacy," Czeisler says. "I think it's time to rethink that."

—Alan W. Dowd



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Choice Cards appear not so temporary

BY TOM PHILPOTT

The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to be pilloried by angry veterans and lawmakers over unmet promises and a cascade of administrative challenges of the Veterans Choice Card program.

Many current problems were predicted by VA or veterans service organizations, but ignored by Congress as it rushed to enact Choice as a short-term solution to a patient wait-time crisis.

It's now clear that Choice won't be a temporary option, as its architects envisioned. If Congress allows, it will become over time the single channel VA uses to coordinate all outside health-care appointments.

That was reinforced at a mid-May hearing of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, where VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson joined the presidents of the Choice provider networks and veterans groups in reviewing the chaotic progress of Choice since its rollout began last November.

VA has been directing veterans into private-sector care for years under various authorities and local contracts usually let by individual VA medical centers. Those costs have been climbing sharply and exceeded \$7 billion in fiscal 2014.

To better control costs amid a burgeoning patient population, VA contracted with Health Net Federal Services LLC of Arlington, Va., and TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp. of Phoenix to begin to consolidate non-VA care under their large networks of civilian health-care providers. The Veterans Choice Act kicked that effort into high gear.

"In the longer term we must rationalize community care into a single channel," Gibson said. "The different programs with different rules, different reimbursement rates, different methods of payment" are too complicated for veterans, providers and VA employees managing outside care. But full consolidation can't occur without help from Congress, given various authorities and programs enacted over the years to experiment with different methods of providing non-VA care.

In March, VA redefined a portion of the Choice Plan's 40-mile rule, dropping the "straight line" method of measuring miles and using driving distance to the nearest medical facility.

That doubled the number of veterans eligible to receive private-sector care, Gibson said. Some lawmakers and veterans groups continue to press for legislation to lift a second restriction on the

40-mile rule, one that keeps veterans ineligible for outside care if they reside within 40 miles of any VA medical facility regardless of whether it can provide the care they need. Ending that restriction, Gibson advised, would "just completely open the aperture" and increase VA health costs by at least \$10 billion annually.

So VA is studying less costly alternatives, he said. One idea is to give Choice managers discretion to decide when it's appropriate to use civilian care based not

on distance but on type of care needed. Another idea is to use VA dollars to improve access but also avoid an exodus of veterans from current insurance plans. Gibson noted that 80 percent of veterans using VA health care have Medicare, TRICARE or other health insurance. If Congress were to allow all those residing more than 40 miles from VA care they need to use private care instead, costs would soar.

To avoid such a shift, Gibson said, VA might ask Congress for legislation to "eliminate that economic distortion in the veteran's decision. You make, for example, Medicare the primary payer. You use VA to indemnify the veteran up to their Medicare co-pay. And all of a sudden you've done something to give real choice to the veteran."

Committee members said they would study VA's ideas to make Choice work more effectively. Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman, warned Gibson not to try to divert dollars earmarked for Choice to other VA priorities.

Tom Philpott has been covering military personnel and veterans issues for more than 30 years.



Roscoe Butler, deputy director of The American Legion's Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation Division, testifies at a hearing on the future of VA's Choice Card program on May 12. Photo by Andrea Dickerson

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A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark t-shirt, focused on rolling a joint. His hands are positioned over a white ceramic tray filled with dried cannabis buds. A single orange and white striped cigarette holder lies across the tray. The background is out of focus, showing an indoor setting.

THE CANNABIS QUESTION

BY KEN OLSEN

PHOTOS BY
LUCAS
CARTER

Some veterans say medical marijuana could reduce painkiller addictions and curb the suicide rate. Is it a crime or a cure?

Anna Begin spent five years worrying she would get a phone call telling her that her son had killed himself. After Ryan came home from Iraq with his right elbow blown off, he went on benders, wrecked two trucks, was jailed, disappeared for weeks and tried to commit suicide several times.

"It was an absolute living hell," Anna says.

Being around Ryan, who served in the Marine Corps, wasn't much better. The cocktail of narcotic painkillers, anti-anxiety medications, antidepressants and sleeping pills prescribed first by the military and then VA made him violent and unpredictable. "When he was on that medication, he would have a wild look in his eyes," Anna says. "I never worried about him hurting anyone else. But you never knew when he was going to spark up in a temper or sleep all day and then be up all night. We couldn't hold family functions here because his mood would be all over the place."

"It was a rough road," Ryan concedes. "I don't know why I am alive."

After five years of this ordeal, he found a private physician about two hours from his home in Jackman, Maine, who prescribed medical marijuana and meditation instead of prescription drugs.

"Dr. Sulak and medical marijuana saved my son's life," Anna says.

Ryan can openly use cannabis to alleviate his pain and post-traumatic stress because Maine is one of 23 states that has legalized medical marijuana – part of a dramatic change in national attitudes that is fraught with legal and regulatory conflicts, controversy about marijuana's medical viability, and a Catch-22 that has all but prohibited research into the potential healing properties of marijuana.

It's also a change that is likely here to stay. A recent Pew Research Center poll found that 52 percent of Americans support legalizing marijuana. "It's partly a cultural shift on what a drug is," says Jim Moore, director of the Tom McCall Center for Policy Innovation at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Ore. More people believe marijuana is less harmful than alcohol and no longer view cannabis as a gateway to harsher illegal-drug use, he says.

LEFT: Ryan Begin of Belfast, Maine, is a 100 percent disabled Iraq veteran who uses medical marijuana and meditation to help treat his post-traumatic stress disorder. Photo by Lucas Carter

Many fiscal conservatives are also weary of the cost of the drug war. FBI statistics show that marijuana accounts for nearly half of all drug arrests in the United States, Moore says. Likewise, half of the people behind bars on drug charges were imprisoned for marijuana offenses. "The incarceration costs for drug crimes are enormous," he adds.

Public acceptance of marijuana has been building for decades. Oregon was the first state to decriminalize possession of pot in 1973. By 1978, eight other states – including Alaska, North Carolina and Ohio – had followed suit. Nearly 20 years later, California led the nation in decriminalizing medical marijuana. And in the past two years, Colorado, Washington, Alaska and Oregon legalized recreational use of marijuana. In addition, the spending bill approved by Congress in December prohibits the U.S. Justice Department and the Drug Enforcement Agency from interfering with state medical marijuana laws.

National legalization is inevitable, although it may take 20 years, Moore predicts. "We're moving toward a critical mass," he says. "States, in effect, are going to force the federal government's hand. They either have to change how they enforce things – how they interpret the current law – or wholesale rewrite the federal drug laws, tax policy and banking laws."

As that showdown lingers, there's a growing clash between veterans who want the option of using medical marijuana and VA, which prohibits its physicians from discussing the topic even in states where medical marijuana is legal. Veterans also report losing medical care when VA learns they are using marijuana – a fear that has effectively driven most use underground. "I call it the new 'don't ask, don't tell' policy," says Michael Krawitz, an Air Force veteran and executive director of Veterans for Medical Cannabis Access. "I tell veterans to shut up."

VA faces a dilemma. Federal law classifies marijuana as a Schedule I narcotic with no recognized medical use and a high risk of addiction. Its doctors can't talk pot because "federal employees must comply with federal law," says VA spokeswoman Gina Jackson.



Hear more of Ryan's story online:
 www.legion.org/legiontv



A growing number of veterans say they want the option of medical marijuana for pain and PTSD. However, VA prohibits its physicians from discussing cannabis use, even in states where medical marijuana is legal.

VA acknowledges that veterans who use marijuana may lose access to some medical care. “In some cases, participation in state marijuana programs may be inconsistent with treatment goals, and therefore treatment plans may be modified accordingly for the health of the patient,” Jackson adds.

Some members of Congress want to unsnarl this conflict. A bipartisan coalition that includes U.S. Reps. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., and Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., has introduced legislation that authorizes VA physicians to recommend marijuana as a treatment option in states where it’s legal. “Our antiquated drug laws must catch up with the real suffering of so many of our veterans,” Rohrabacher says. “It is unconscionable that a VA doctor cannot offer a full range of treatments, including medical marijuana.”

But Congress has sent mixed messages on marijuana. The December legislation that prohibited federal law enforcement from interfering with state medical marijuana laws also blocked a voter initiative legalizing recreational marijuana use in Washington, D.C. And Congress previously blocked the district’s voter-approved medical marijuana initiative.

As marijuana hangs in this legal limbo, former servicemembers contend that narcotic painkillers, sleeping pills, amphetamines, antidepressants and drugs they are being prescribed are dangerous, if not lethal. “With 22 veteran suicides a day, it’s clear we don’t know what we’re doing,” says Sean Kiernan, an

Army veteran who had his own brush with suicide after being treated with prescription drugs.

Other veterans say the status quo pharmaceuticals leave them stupefied. “Shortly after I got out, I started experiencing symptoms of PTSD,” says Sean Azzariti, who served two tours in Iraq with the Marine Corps. “I was prescribed Trazodone, Klonopin and Adderall – 13 pills total a day. I was just becoming an unfunctional human being.”

Some physicians acknowledge the downside of conventional treatment. “Doctors like me have put patients through the gantlet with FDA-approved drugs and we’ve turned these patients into zombies,” says Sue Sisley, a psychiatrist in private practice in Arizona who treats veterans, police officers and firefighters. “They are plagued with the side effects.”

The narcotic painkillers commonly prescribed to veterans are also highly addictive and can lead to overdose deaths, says Iraq veteran Scott Murphy, founder of Veterans for Safe Access and Compassionate Care. Medical marijuana can help veterans reduce their opiate dependence and leads to fewer suicides, Murphy and many other veterans and marijuana advocacy groups contend.

“Several veterans I’m close with had severe PTSD issues and suicidal tendencies when they came home,” says Kerri Babbitt, an Army reservist who deployed to Afghanistan as an MP. Many have successfully used medical marijuana to treat their symptoms, she adds.

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■ The Tribute features a set of stunning faux ivory grips decorated with a logo honoring the service of Vietnam Veterans. The grip features a trio of warrior silhouettes over an outline of Vietnam, encircled by the slogan, "Vietnam War: Ours Was a Noble Cause." All three figures represent the unbreakable bond between men in uniform.



■ The left side of the slide features banners reading, "None Could Have Done It Better," and "Brothers Forever," set among familiar scenes of warriors serving in Vietnam against a forest of bamboo. Bamboo is common in Vietnam and was included as a symbol of Vietnam on the Vietnam Service Medal which was awarded to those who served.

■ The center image features a group of warriors standing together. The man on the far left is carrying a portable radio and the soldier in the center carries a M60 machine gun slung over his shoulder. It didn't matter the assignment, from patrols through the remote jungle, or a tight-knit company defending a small firebase, you can sense the deep personal connection between the men. The image to the right features a fellow soldier attending an injured warrior. In tough situations, friendship, loyalty, and words of encouragement could keep hope alive.



■ The right side features two soldiers aiding a wounded comrade while another covers their backs with his M-16. The image captures the strength of a unit working as one. In the heat of battle men depend on each other. It's a special trust that only veterans can fully understand. Also featured are banners honoring those who served in Vietnam. When the nation called, they answered.

■ Each side features banners that read, "Lest We Forget," along with powerful icons familiar to any Vietnam Veteran. One features a set of dog tags, the gleaming metal identification tags of those who serve in America's military, and a pair of empty combat boots.



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Ryan Begin tends to the marijuana plants growing in the basement of his home. Per Maine law, each medical marijuana patient is permitted to have six cannabis plants in the flowering stage. Therefore, patients are able to grow their own medicine at a much lower cost than purchasing it from a third party.

"If you are willing to give someone a dangerous drug like an opiate, it seems insane not to give them a less dangerous option," Murphy adds. "And this would be under a doctor's supervision."

There is little research to back the use of medical marijuana to reduce opiate dependence. However, a recent study published in *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association* shows that states with legal access to medical marijuana had fewer painkiller overdose deaths.

"We found a 25 percent lower rate of opiate overdose deaths in states that had enacted medical marijuana laws," says Marcus Bachhuber, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia VA Medical Center. "We were surprised by the magnitude of the result," he says of the study, which examined narcotic painkiller overdoses from 1999 to 2010.

That's significant considering that use of narcotic painkillers quadrupled in the United States during the years Bachhuber studied. In addition, 60 percent of the people who died from painkiller overdoses had legal prescriptions for those drugs. But the study doesn't conclusively credit marijuana for reducing the rate of fatal painkiller overdoses. "We think this might be due, in part, to other things states are doing to address opioid overdoses, like educating medical providers or educating the public," Bachhuber says.

"We need large studies that follow individuals with chronic pain over time and evaluate the effect of medical marijuana on their pain."

The skeptics include Anthony Dragovich, a former Army pain specialist now in private practice in Virginia. "There's no evidence marijuana would decrease (narcotic painkiller) dependence," he says. "Actual experience would hint otherwise." He likewise doubts that marijuana lowers the risk of suicide.

"There is some evidence it works for pain, nausea, emesis (vomiting) and some neurological conditions," Dragovich says. "But it isn't well-studied. I would be very concerned about using medical marijuana as a cure for anything rather than part of an intensive psychological rehabilitation program for patients with significant PTSD."

A study that followed 80 veterans in New Mexico – one of the states that has legalized medical marijuana – found a 75 percent decrease in PTSD symptoms, Sisley says. But additional research on the effectiveness of medical marijuana is all but impossible because of federal regulations.

"There are so many barriers that no other Schedule I drug has to face," she says.

Last spring, Sisley won approval for another study using medical marijuana to treat PTSD after a four-year fight with the National Institute on Drug Abuse and other agencies. She promptly lost her job at the

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Ryan and his daughter Nala, 8, play on the couch while his wife, Hailey, looks on. The couple will welcome a baby boy in August. While he was using VA-prescribed painkillers and anti-anxiety medications, Ryan couldn't imagine fathering another child. "My ability to see more than one minute into the future was completely hindered by the effects of the drugs," he says.

University of Arizona, where she planned to conduct the research. "They could never deal with the optics of having veterans smoking marijuana on campus," she says. "That would have been a media frenzy." (The university says it cannot comment on Sisley's departure because it's a personnel matter. The institution would have hosted the project "with a different chief scientist," a university spokesman said.)

Sisley now plans to split her study between Johns Hopkins University and another as-yet-unnamed research institution. "I think we have a duty to these veterans to study this drug in the most rigorous way," she says. "It's possible the plant could be a detriment. We'll be able to collect the data on the good and the bad and put it out there for public scrutiny."

It's important to note that Sisley came to this work opposed to cannabis. She chastised veterans who first told her they were using medical marijuana to treat their PTSD. "I tried to persuade them to use conventional methods," she says. "But there were more and more high-ranking conservative veterans, who hated street drugs, who were using medical marijuana."

Sisley has also been persuaded to dig deeper as a result of the anecdotal evidence showing that

cannabis helps address sleep problems. "Sleep deprivation is particularly brutal for veterans with PTSD," she says. "People who live with chronic sleep deprivation are at high risk to end their life. If marijuana could help stabilize these symptoms, it might curb the suicide epidemic."

Still, physicians, patients and families are careful to say cannabis isn't a universal cure. Even Ryan Begin's mother is ambivalent about recreational marijuana. But watching her son get control of his life convinced her that medical marijuana should be available to veterans and civilians dealing with chronic pain and post-traumatic stress.

Ryan credits his family and friends for helping him get off prescription pills and connect with the right physician, and with medical marijuana. "Now I'm in a position physically and mentally where I can help other vets," he says. He won custody of his 8-year-old daughter a year ago. He remarried in September. Today he's looking at buying a home.

"I'm amazed at how far he's come," Anna says. "For me, it's like winning the lottery." ¶

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

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States struggle to tame new marijuana economy

Highly explosive hash-oil operations popping up in residential neighborhoods. Figuring out who's driving under the influence of pot. A spike in edible marijuana overdoses. These are a few of the reasons Colorado law-enforcement officers feel overwhelmed by the dramatic increase in legal access to marijuana in recent years.

"We were taken by surprise," says Marc Vasquez, marijuana issues chairman for the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP). "I don't think we thought we would end up where we are today."

Medical marijuana was relatively low-key when Colorado voters passed a constitutional amendment legalizing medicinal use in 2000. For the next decade, the number of registered medical cannabis users held steady at about 5,000. Then a lawsuit verdict overturned limits on the number of patients a marijuana caregiver could oversee, effectively repealing limits on medical pot cultivation.

"That caused things to really take off," says Vasquez, former chief of enforcement for the Colorado Medical Marijuana Enforcement Division. "We saw the opening of commercial medical marijuana dispensaries with no regulatory framework."

In 2012, Colorado voters approved an amendment legalizing recreational marijuana. "State and local law enforcement have been playing catch-up ever since," Vasquez says. Among the problems: sorting out which drivers have had too much to drink and which have had too much to smoke. Money is a factor, too. It costs about \$30 to administer an alcohol test and about \$300 to test for marijuana use, he adds.

The issues are so pressing that the CACP hosted a national symposium on marijuana in January. Meanwhile, Vasquez offers this advice: "If your state faces the legalization of medical or recreational marijuana, try to get the regulatory framework in place before dispensaries and commercial cultivations are allowed to operate."

Regulators are a little farther ahead of the game in Washington state, where voters also approved recreational

marijuana use in 2012. There's money built into the program to monitor and mitigate some of the potential social costs of legalization, including tracking marijuana consumption among youth.

"As many people on the law-enforcement side backed the initiative as opposed it," says Chris Marr, a former state Liquor Control Board member and former state senator. "The subtext there is that the war on drugs has failed."

Other supporters see marijuana taxes as a means of funding schools and public safety.

The rollout of Washington's marijuana programs hasn't been flawless. Medical marijuana, legalized by voters in 1998, is largely unregulated. There are now large-scale growing-and-selling operations in Seattle that are essentially for-profit businesses competing with state-licensed recreational pot stores, Marr says.

Washington's medical marijuana is also taxed at a lower rate than recreational marijuana. That makes it harder to persuade cannabis consumers to buy from legitimate dealers. "It's a price-sensitive market," Marr says. "Our consultant told us after our first year of operation, we would probably capture 25 percent of the market and the rest would be split between the medical and the illicit market."

Stores in the Evergreen State officially started selling recreational pot in July. As of November, Washington had collected about \$16 million in excise, sales and business taxes from pot. That could rise to an estimated \$375 million in the 2015-2017 biennium, according to state revenue forecasters.

Meanwhile, the Washington Legislature is expected to try to get the medical marijuana industry under better control. Regulating that and other aspects of the new marijuana economy won't be easy. But Marr isn't discouraged. It took years following the repeal of prohibition to get the alcohol industry there. Marijuana is no different.

"It's like a wild horse," he says. "You won't throw a saddle on it right away without having problems."

—Ken Olsen

How a Chicago Doctor **Shook Up** the Hearing Aid Industry with his **Newest Invention**

New nearly invisible digital hearing aid breaks price barrier in affordability

Reported by J. Page

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A LEVEL OF CONCERN

A wide-angle photograph of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, a bright blue lake is visible, with a rocky shoreline in the middle ground. A few small figures of people are walking along this shoreline. The background is dominated by towering, rugged mountains with patches of snow and dense forests of coniferous trees. The lighting suggests a sunny day with long shadows.

BY DAVID CARLE

California's water crisis demands a choice between unlimited growth and a sustainable future.

During a fourth year of exceptional drought in California, the crisis could panic and blind the state's citizens. Or they might instead consider the historic connections between water and growth in a land where too much has never been enough.

No simple criteria can define a drought, which may be declared whenever there is too little supply to meet demand. Today there are 33 million more thirsty Californians than there were during the extreme drought years of 1929 to 1934, which until now were the driest stretch since record-keeping began.

This year was the driest ever.

On April 1, the snowpack was 5 percent of average, the smallest ever measured. The four winters since 2012 have produced the most severe drought of the past 1,200 years, according to the American Geophysical Union.

Comparisons to historic averages become less meaningful if the state's climate is entering some kind of new normal, yet the California Department of Water Resources figures that 200 million acre-feet (MAF) of water fall onto the state in an average year. (One acre-foot, or AF, equals 325,851 gallons, enough to cover a football field one foot deep. An AF can serve the annual needs of five to 10 people.) Rain and snow evaporate, are used by plants, and can soak into the ground. What remains is surface runoff, which is most accessible to people and averages around 71 MAF a year.

However, California's water systems have contracts for water deliveries totaling more than five times the amount of surface water actually available on average. Though some water can be used multiple times, and wet cycles do happen, "normal" weather is almost never "average." Hydrologic wishful thinking explains much of the state's water dilemma.

NUMBER CRUNCH Roughly 75 percent of human thirst for water in California originates in the southern half of the state, while 75 percent of the rain and snow falls in the north. To create 21st-century California, a network of dams and long-distance aqueducts was engineered. Today's enormous urban centers exist only by importing water to overcome local resource limits. Of 42 million acre-feet of developed water supply, about 80 percent irrigates farms and the rest supplies urban users.

The California State Water Project (SWP) moves water from the Sacramento River watershed to

southern cities. More than two-thirds of Californians receive some SWP water. A surreal circumstance shaping water policy is that the SWP cannot deliver its contracted allocations of 4.17 MAF of water a year. Deliveries between 2000 and 2014 were just 55 percent of that.

"Paper water," then, when viewed as an entitlement to the wet stuff itself, ignores the reality of overpromised contractual amounts, and that is a source of confusion sometimes used to manipulate the public debate.

The federal Central Valley Project (CVP) was conceived to tame seasonal flooding and shift water southward to irrigate drier San Joaquin Valley farmlands and reduce overdrafting of groundwater. The CVP transformed the Central Valley into one of the most important agricultural regions on earth and can store about 17 percent of the state's developed water. But rather than solving the groundwater overdraft problem, agriculture expanded onto new acreage with CVP water, and during droughts groundwater is still pumped at unsustainable rates – which explains why only 5 percent of the state's farm acreage has been fallowed during this drought.

The Colorado River Aqueduct crosses the Mojave Desert to deliver 37 percent of Southern California's urban water. Separate canals bring irrigation water to 900,000 acres of productive desert farmland. The past 15 years were the driest in the river's watershed in a century. Multistate water withdrawals have drastically lowered its two massive reservoirs, Mead and Powell.

The Los Angeles Aqueduct was the first major long-range water delivery project in California. The city acquired Eastern Sierra water rights by purchasing 98 percent of the private land in the Owens Valley, 235 miles north. The imperialistic pressure exerted on unwilling landowners became an inglorious part of California's water history. With the aqueduct, the city's population grew from 200,000 to nearly 4 million today. William Mulholland, who designed the audacious engineering feat, observed, "Whoever brings the water brings the people."

To address environmental and air-quality effects from its aqueduct, Los Angeles has reduced its reliance on Eastern Sierra water. Conservation and recycling allowed LA to grow by 30 percent in the past 40 years, yet see a 7 percent decrease in its total water use and a 15 percent drop in per-capita demand. Last October, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti directed that water imports be cut by 50 percent by 2024.

DRY WELLS With 80 percent of the state's developed surface water going to agriculture, farm efficiency becomes a major concern. Each of us consumes more than 4,500 gallons of water daily in food. California is the No. 1 agricultural state in the nation, with nine of the top 10 agricultural counties and some \$50 billion in annual production. Fifty-five percent of the nation's fruits, nuts and vegetables are grown there. California is the nearly exclusive source of almonds, walnuts, artichokes, dates, figs, olives and raisins. If urban communities are the backbone of the economy, farms can be considered its vital organs because food is essential for life.

Whenever surface water declines, farmers increase their use of groundwater. Statewide, wells historically pumped 500,000 to 1.5 million acre-feet of water a year. NASA's satellite monitors show that as pumping accelerated during recent dry years, some groundwater levels dropped by more than 100 feet. The Sacramento and San Joaquin river basins lost over 12 MAF each year after 2012.

Until recently, California had no statewide groundwater management laws. Land ownership brought the right to unregulated pumping from wells. The exceptional drought and the exceptional groundwater overdraft it engendered led to passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in September 2014.

Almost every farm organization stood staunchly opposed, concerned about property rights and land values. Other Californians lauded it as a long-overdue step toward rational groundwater management, although plans will not be implemented before 2040. Sustainability will wait on a whole new generation, should there be enough groundwater left to manage.

Meanwhile, 1,700 household wells went dry in California during 2014, mostly due to deep drilling by nearby farms that could afford to chase the declining water level.

According to the Pacific Institute, 600,000 acre-feet of agricultural water per year could be saved by smarter irrigation scheduling on just 30 percent of the state's vegetables and orchards, converting 20 percent of Central Valley vegetables and 10 percent of orchards and vineyards to drip and sprinkler irrigation, and practicing "regulated deficit irrigation" on 20 percent of almond and pistachio orchards. Deficit irrigation focuses watering on sensitive growing stages; extending efficiencies could free 6 MAF per year.



Engineer Elise Chen speaks in front of water purification containers at San Diego's Advanced Water Purification Facility. The pilot project is part of a \$2.5 billion plan to recycle 83 million gallons of wastewater a day for drinking by 2035, about one-third of the city's supply. This is one of the region's costly investments for addressing future droughts and sweeping statewide cuts to urban water use. AP

added to a cacophony of drought news coverage.

Severe declines have occurred in fish species that require river water to connect to the sea. Years of increased pumping from the West Coast's largest estuary to serve southward-flowing aqueducts coincide, tellingly, with the most recent fish declines. In the 1990s, the average pumped from the delta was 4.6 MAF, but extractions increased to 6 MAF from 2000 through 2007.

Courts ordered temporary shutdowns to stop the killing of endangered delta smelt during months when they mass near aqueduct pumps. Fishing seasons were canceled when Chinook salmon runs plummeted. Declines have been documented all the way down the food chain, to plankton that support all life in the estuary ecosystem.

Water users south of the delta, hoping to keep pumps operating, embraced a state proposal to construct two tunnels, each 35 miles long and 40 feet in diameter, beneath the delta. Tunnels would isolate fresh Sacramento River water from salty

TUNNEL VISION

"Farmers vs. fish" and "regulatory drought" accusations have

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tidewater, reduce pumping from the current problematic locations and, with habitat restoration, increase reliability of water deliveries. This would be the most expensive public works project in U.S. history, costing over \$50 billion when interest is included.

There are concerns that once high-capacity tunnels are built, powerful interests might overcome promised limitations and take even more water from the delta. Otherwise, leery opponents ask, "Why build on such a scale?"

Water users themselves, who are required to cover construction costs, wonder if their benefits are adequate when less water is likely to come their way.

Characterizing the conflict as "fish vs. farmers" ignores many truths. Concern for a tiny smelt is belittled by some who ignore that species' role in the broader ecosystem. The flowing estuary is salmon water, too. Water moving out to sea is not wasted; as it serves anadromous fish, it also holds back intruding tides. The aqueduct intakes must not be contaminated by saltwater, and many farmers on islands within the delta depend on the flowing channels.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency criticized details in the project's environmental documentation, so the state decided last spring to uncouple habitat restoration elements in order to move ahead with tunnel construction. The future of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan is uncertain.

DESAL DREAMS It seems insane to harvest water hundreds of miles away, expend energy to pump it over mountains, clean and treat it, use it just once (mostly to flush toilets and irrigate lawns), sanitize it again and then dump it out to sea. Yet that has been the fate of 3.5 MAF each year in Southern California. Urban water can instead be recycled and reused again and again.

Successes in wastewater recycling in Orange County serve as models for cities like Long Beach, Santa Monica, the West Basin Municipal Water District and Santa Clara, which are weaning themselves from imported water and are better prepared to deal with droughts.

All of Earth's water is recycled. Wastewater is just a temporary status until natural processes of the water cycle clean and distill it. Today's recycling goes far beyond standard wastewater treatment, using reverse osmosis filtering, microfiltration and ultraviolet radiation to yield a product akin to distilled water. Full treatment removes medical wastes and drugs. When

injected underground, recycled water goes through further natural filtration and cleansing by soil organisms.

In California, 60 percent of domestic water goes to landscaping. Earlier this year Gov. Jerry Brown called for rebates for removing 50 million square feet of lawn. Cities and water agencies have already been paying \$2 to \$4 per square foot to homeowners who replace grass with landscaping more appropriate to the climate.

The available sites for massive dams in California's river canyons have been developed; the state has 1,400 dams today. Last November, voters approved a state bond measure that includes \$2.7 billion for new storage. A Stanford University think tank concluded that if those funds are spent on groundwater storage, 8.4 MAF of new capacity could result – six times more than the capacity of new dams being considered. Yet projects underground, out of sight, seem less appealing to many people.

Tapping into the Pacific Ocean feeds dreams of making water limits irrelevant. Desalinated water still costs double the price of water from new reservoirs or recycling wastewater, and at least four times the cost from conservation methods. The desal process impacts ocean life, as plankton is sucked in and concentrated brine waste returned to the sea.

In 2016, the San Diego County Water Authority will begin using desalinated ocean water from what will be the largest desal plant in the nation. Forcing 100 million gallons of seawater a day through filters will require enough electricity to power 28,500 homes. Sixty-six acres of restored wetlands in San Diego Bay will offset some environmental harm, and brine waste will be blended with seawater before being flushed back to sea. San Diego County expects this new local water supply to serve 7 percent of its domestic needs.

If seawater desalination turns out to be feasible, the next question to answer is this: does overcrowded California really want the unlimited growth that could be accommodated with "unlimited" water? Perhaps it is time instead to embrace the reality of water limits, step away from the state's history of frenzied growth and seek a sustainable future. ¶

David Carle worked as a California State Parks ranger for 27 years. He and his wife, Janet, are the authors of "Traveling the 38th Parallel: A Water Line Around the World" and other books.



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‘A BIG OPPORTUNITY’

Commissioner says that Legionnaires have a part to play in marking the Great War’s centennial. **BY MATT GRILLS**

On paper, James Whitfield seems an ideal representative for The American Legion on the nation’s World War One Centennial Commission.

For 70 years, he’s been a member of Matthews-Crawford Post 131 in Warrensburg, Mo. He spent 57 years serving the Missouri Boys State program. During his time as head of the Missouri Veterans Commission, the state established seven veterans homes and a veterans cemetery system. And he’s an honorary lifetime commander of the Missouri American Legion – an honor Whitfield shares with just three others, including President Harry Truman.

More, he’s a longtime supporter of the Liberty Memorial, dedicated in Kansas City in 1926 as a monument to the sacrifices of U.S. servicemembers during the Great War. In December, President Obama signed legislation granting the site national status.

But for Whitfield, his World War One Commission appointment is personal. Veterans of the war were his friends, his mentors, and the guys who told his father that “Jimmy” needed to be part of The American Legion. They were the generation that started it all, and to speak for the organization they founded is “a hell of a responsibility,” Whitfield says.

He recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine* about his reverence for the Americans who fought in World War I and the commission’s plans to honor them.

Growing up in the years between the world wars, did you know many veterans?

My father had a dairy, so I became acquainted with a number of World War I veterans because we delivered milk to them. I was enthralled with the idea of how these men had been in France. I remember one talking about his tour around Château-Thierry, where a lot of Missourians were during the war. It was always a pleasure to meet and talk with these

men. I respected them because they had served our country, and that was important to me, even as a kid.

In the middle of high school, World War II broke out. I enlisted as a senior in 1943, but I promised my parents I would wait until I graduated. I went through boot camp in Farragut, Idaho, and was in the Navy about four years. It was a great tour of duty. I’ve often said that the Navy was very good to me. I just hope I was good to it.

Where did you serve during World War II?

After boot camp, I was assigned to the advance detail of a troop transport: *General George O. Squier*, named for a World War I general. I ended up being on it 33 months. Because it was a troop-carrying ship, I did get to the States once in a while, but there was always a quick turnaround. When we were scheduled to sail, we sailed on time.

We were in the South Pacific for a few months and took troops into New Guinea and other areas. Then we transferred to the Atlantic for reinforcing troops in Europe. We were also involved in the invasion of southern France. The troops went down the sides on rope ladders to get into the landing crafts. Battleships were on the other side of us, and we could hear their projectiles over our heads going into the beach. That was something.

And when you returned home, you joined The American Legion.

Through the dairy, I got acquainted with A.C. “Gus” Bass, who ended up being state commander of the Legion. When I got out of the Navy, he happened to be president of Citizens Bank in Warrensburg and encouraged me to keep my GI insurance. If I needed a couple hundred bucks, I could go see him. He was instrumental to my early Legion career. In fact, the World War I guys elected me post commander when



Navy veteran James Whitfield, The American Legion's representative on the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission, stands outside the historic Liberty Memorial in Kansas City. Photo by Jason Dailey



I was in college. They helped me a lot. Whatever success I had, they made it happen. They were genuine people – very patriotic, very community minded. They were good solid Americans, and they expected me and my generation to be the same.

Describe the World War One Commission and its work thus far.

Our mission is to provide opportunities for Americans to learn about the history of the war and our nation's involvement, as well as to honor all who served and those who did their part back home in the war effort.

We meet in person once a quarter and are required to meet at least once a year here at the National World War I Museum. Congress charged us with certain things to be done, and that's what we're trying to accomplish. We've got volunteers and have reached out to each governor, encouraging them to establish some kind of state World War I committee or commission to help disseminate information and educational materials.

For example, they may or may not know how many thousands served from their state. In Missouri, few people know that we had six Medal of Honor recipients from World War I. In fact, there's a boulevard in St. Louis named after one of them, and I doubt if people in St. Louis know it. So that's how we're going to get the word out, through education and various projects that develop locally and get radio, TV and the newspaper in that community talking about something specific. And, of course, we're on Facebook and Twitter. Social media is probably going to do more for us than anything.

And there are finally plans for a national memorial in Washington, D.C., correct?

The Liberty Memorial here in Kansas City was thought of as the national memorial, but it wasn't officially that. The American Legion's Resolution 15, passed by the National Executive Committee in October 2010, called for it. And in the fiscal 2015 defense bill that just passed was a bipartisan amendment renaming this location the National World War I Memorial and Museum.

At the same time, we're refurbishing Pershing Park in Washington, D.C., so that it will be a national memorial. There will be no more monuments on the Mall, but we'll have better recognition of World War I in the capital. There was once talk of renaming the District of



TOP: A Renault FT-17 tank, the type used by the U.S. Army.

MIDDLE: The museum has an extensive collection of World War I posters from home and abroad.

BOTTOM: The U.S. flag that flew over the Capitol when President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany on April 2, 1917, is on display.



A French Nieuport N12 aircraft is suspended above a display case of U.S. Army uniforms. Photos by Jason Dailey

National World War I Museum and Memorial

Officially recognized by Congress, the National World War I Museum and Memorial – “built by Kansas Citians, embraced by the nation” – is receiving new attention as the Great War’s centennial continues.

In 1919, the Liberty Memorial Association and residents of Kansas City raised more than \$2.5 million in 10 days to construct a monument to those who served. Two years later, the five Allied commanders – Lt. Gen. Baron Jacques of Belgium, Gen. Armando Vittorio Diaz of Italy, Marshal Ferdinand Foch of France, Gen. John J. Pershing of the American Expeditionary Forces, and Adm. David Earl Beatty of the British Navies – attended the groundbreaking, along with thousands of Legionnaires.

Over time the memorial deteriorated, and in 1994 the tower closed due to safety concerns. But the city rallied, approving a limited-run sales tax to restore it. In addition, more than \$102 million was raised to expand the site with a larger museum and research center underneath the memorial.

Since the museum reopened in 2006, more than a million people have visited – including Frank Buckles, America’s last surviving World War I veteran, in 2008.

Visitors enter by crossing a glass bridge over a symbolic Western Front poppy field. Nine thousand red silk poppies each represent 1,000 deaths, meant to prompt reflection on the 9 million people who died as a direct result of the war.

“It’s striking as you’re coming in for the first time,” says Mike Vietti, the museum’s media and communications manager.

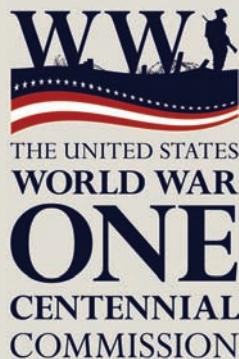
The main gallery features a detailed chronology wall of firsthand accounts of the war’s participants, interactive display tables, ground-level views into six different trench scenes, and weapons and uniforms from the military forces of all nations involved.

Current exhibits include “Sand to Snow: Global War 1915” and “Drawn to War: The Political Cartoons of Louis Raemaekers.” The museum offers online exhibits, too, such as “Over By Christmas,” “The Christmas Truce, Winter 1914,” “Home Before the Leaves Fall,” “Harmonies of the Homefront,” “Snoopy” and “WWI All-Stars.”

Learn more about upcoming events and exhibits at the National World War I Museum and Memorial:

 theworldwar.org

Follow the World War One Centennial Commission



other resources at worldwar-1centennial.org/index.php/competition-overview.html.

- Design entries are being accepted through July 21 for the new National World War I Memorial. Located at Pershing Park on Pennsylvania Avenue – “America’s Main Street,” one block from the White House – the memorial will honor the 4.7 million Americans who served in the war, including the 116,516 who gave their lives. Download a competition manual and
- Download Google’s Camera app to your phone and use the PhotoSphere setting to take 360-degree pictures of local World War I memorials and monuments. The commission will post the best submissions.
- Go to worldwar-1centennial.org/index.php/events/events-by-calendar.html for a full calendar of centennial events, or to submit an event.
- The commission depends on volunteers. If you’re interested and available to help a few hours a week or even just on special occasions, submit a volunteer information form at worldwar-1centennial.org/index.php/help-us/volunteer-opportunities.html.
- The commission receives no taxpayer funds and welcomes contributions of any size. Donate online at worldwar-1centennial.org/index.php/help-us/please-donate.html in memory of a family member who served during the Great War.
- Stay up to date on the commission’s news releases and feature articles at worldwar-1centennial.org/index.php/press-media/news-archive-page.html.
- Know of a World War I monument, memorial, museum, library, ship, park or other place? Add it to the commission’s online database.
- Download classroom curriculum and learning materials at worldwar-1centennial.org/index.php/education/classroom-resources.html.
- The commission is working on a proposal to the U.S. Postal Service’s Stamp Advisory Committee, asking for a series of stamps during the war’s centennial.

Explore the full World War One Centennial Commission website:

 worldwar-1centennial.org

“Like” the commission on Facebook:

 www.facebook.com/ww1centennial

Columbia War Memorial, but it only recognizes 499 citizens of the district who died in the war. A national memorial will satisfy most everybody. There’s a design competition going on now, and a committee of experts will decide which entry is best, with a final OK from the commission itself in January.

What else is in the works?

We’re cooperating with the American Battle Monuments Commission on plans for an interpretive visitors center at the Argonne in France, with a tentative dedication in November 2016. We’ve also set the date of April 2017 to have some function here at the museum marking the 100th anniversary of the United States entering the war, and hopefully the president will come. Down the road, we’re talking about some kind of parade on the day the troops marched down New York’s Fifth Avenue 100 years ago, and special events for Veterans Day in 2018 and Memorial Day in 1919. A lot of our activity will be cooperating with state and local groups.

How can American Legion posts and departments support the commission?

We hope they’ll take up the banner and do something locally. The Legion has its own centennial committee, so hopefully we will supplement each other. Some posts are named for World War I veterans; they could do some kind of history. They could take a survey of World War I monuments and memorials in their city, their county, and refurbish them. In the process, they’re going to get recognition, which then tells the public that World War I was important.

If a state has a World War I centennial commission or committee, I’d hope the department is friendly enough with the state government that it would be a part of that commission or committee. Whatever is happening to mark the war’s centennial in their states and their communities, departments should be a part of it.

This is a big opportunity. World War I reshaped the world. World War II was a product of it, and I think our problems in the Middle East and other places today can be traced back to World War I – how things were handled and countries were renamed and realigned. So I think it’s important for the American people to understand that what’s happening today is not just happening today. There’s some history behind it. 

Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.



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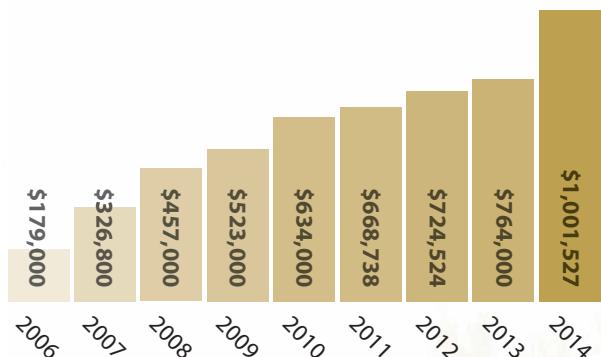
On Aug. 23, The American Legion's 10th annual Legacy Run – sponsored by USAA – will take off from Kenneth N. Dowden Wayne Post 64 on the west side of Indianapolis, and head for the 97th National Convention in Baltimore. The marquee national event in the Legion Riders' year, the run will take hundreds of participants through Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania before concluding at Post 22 in Towson, Md., on Aug. 26.

This year, the run will include daily stops at military memorials along the route for wreath-laying ceremonies, as well as visits to the Flight 93 Memorial and Gettysburg.

The run raises funds for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides college scholarships for the children of U.S. servicemembers killed on active duty since 9/11.

In 2014, donations made on the floor of the 96th National Convention in Charlotte raised the Legacy Run total past \$1 million for the first time; more than \$435,000 was raised during the ride itself. Together, the nine Legacy Runs have raised

more than \$5 million for the fund, with each surpassing the previous year's total:



Register online through Aug. 1 at www.legion.org/riders/registration. This year, non-riders may also register in support of the Legacy Run. Non-riding supporters provide much of the resources needed to conduct the run; supporting registrations of \$25 or greater will receive a full map book and 2015 American Legion Legacy Run patch.



Route Overview



See stories, photos and video from the 2015 run: www.legion.org/riders
Search "National American Legion Riders" on Facebook to follow the run there.

Photos by Tom Stratman





“THE LAST THING WE WANT TO HAPPEN”

Fifty years ago, the United States sent troops to prevent a communist takeover in the Dominican Republic.

BY ALAN W. DOWD

U.S. soldiers hide a child underneath a military jeep to protect him during a firefight in Santo Domingo on May 5, 1965.

Wikimedia Commons

President Lyndon Johnson called it “another Cuba.” Ambassador William Tapley Bennett called it “collective madness.” One historian described it as the bloodiest battle in Dominican history. It led to what the U.S. military called Operation Power Pack, a rapid-response mission that stabilized the Dominican Republic, protected U.S. interests and prevented another nation from sliding into communism.

TAKEOVER Promising political, constitutional and economic reforms, Juan Bosch was elected president in December 1962, but was overthrown by the Dominican military in September 1963.

Washington recognized the post-Bosch government. Then, in spring 1965, Col. Francisco Caamaño led elements of the military in toppling the post-Bosch government and installing a new regime under the “Constitutionalist” banner. The rest of the Dominican army – the “Loyalists” – used heavy weapons to fight the rebels.

The crisis rapidly devolved into a civil war. At least 3,000 Dominicans were killed in the fighting.

Washington worried that the Caamaño insurgency “had been co-opted by Castro,” Mark Updegrove writes in his history of the Johnson presidency, “*Indomitable Will*.” U.S. embassy cables estimated that 1,500 rebels were under communist command.

By late April 1965, Johnson privately warned lawmakers that “Castro forces are ... gaining control” and worried that “another Cuba” was taking root. Publicly, he added, “People trained outside the Dominican Republic are seeking to gain control.”

When the prospect of military intervention was raised, a U.S. diplomat said American troops “shooting up a capital city” was “the last thing we want to happen,” Updegrove details. Underscoring his seriousness, Johnson bluntly replied, “No The last thing we want to have happen is a communist takeover.”

TRAPPED USS *Boxer* had steamed to the region. Bennett wanted the flattop “to move within sight of land in order to demonstrate the U.S. presence,” as Lawrence Yates, a scholar with the Combat Studies Institute, wrote in his definitive account of Operation Power Pack. Much of what we know about this oft-overlooked operation is thanks to

Yates; this article relies on his recap of Power Pack’s inner workings.

On April 26, as rebels menaced Americans at the Hotel Embajador in Santo Domingo and Loyalist troops moved in on the capital city, the Pentagon placed units of the 82nd Airborne on alert.

On April 28, Johnson reported, “American lives are in danger,” and noted that 400 Marines had landed to evacuate them. This vanguard Marine force arrived by helicopter from *Boxer*, landing west of Santo Domingo.

It wasn’t the first time the United States had intervened in the Dominican Republic: previous instances were in 1798, 1903, 1904, 1914 and 1916 to 1924.

Fast-forward to 1965. As the situation deteriorated in the capital, 1,500 more Marines from the 6th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived, coming ashore southwest of Santo Domingo.

Advance elements of the 82nd were to parachute into an area near San Isidro, east of Santo Domingo; secure an airfield; move west to the Duarte Bridge; and assist in evacuating Americans. But rather than conduct an airborne assault, the decision was made to land the troop-loaded planes. It was a fortunate adjustment. The LZ was “covered with coral,” Yates noted. “Had the original plan calling for an airdrop been carried out, the casualty rate ... would have been enormously high.”

A fleet of 144 C-130s delivered the spearhead force April 30. Robert Yago, crew chief on a C-130 from the 41st Troop Carrier Squadron, shuttled troops and equipment from Fort Bragg in North Carolina to Ramey Air Force Base in Puerto Rico to San Isidro. “It’s much easier to kick ‘em out the back door,” he admits, than landing in not-so-friendly territory.

John Kiser of the 82nd Airborne’s 1/504 (A Company) remembers touching down in the predawn darkness. “The planes never even stopped,” he recalls. “They landed and taxied, and we drove out on jeeps and ran out the back.”

Once on the ground, the 82nd’s troopers crossed to the west side of the bridge, coming under heavy fire from Constitutionalist units. The Americans used 105 mm howitzers to silence the enemy guns, though stricter rules of engagement (ROE) soon limited the use of heavy weapons. Kiser notes that Washington “did some things that were really stupid” regarding ROE. At one point, “they told us we weren’t allowed to shoot unless shot at.”

The Marines focused on securing areas between the U.S. Embassy and the Hotel Embajador. Using tanks and light-tracked vehicles as cover, they crept

along streets named after George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. As the Marines cleared out snipers, they sustained their first KIA.

The situation in Santo Domingo was precarious. “Troops – not land – provided the only buffer between U.S. officials and the rebels,” Yates wrote.

U.S. ground commanders soon decided to establish a corridor linking the Marine position in Santo Domingo with the Army position east of the city. A company of Marines moved northeast, encountering no resistance as they arrived at the rendezvous point. But their counterparts from the 82nd met stiff resistance, suffering their first KIA; another trooper died from wounds.

The corridor – or “line of communication” (LOC) – allowed for secure communication and transportation, enabled the delivery of humanitarian aid (U.S. forces delivered 15,000 tons of food), and trapped 80 percent of the rebel force. By May 3, the LOC “ended any possibility that the Constitutionalists could take over the country by military means,” Yates noted. “They were surrounded and outgunned.”

COLD AND HOT Johnson dispatched John Martin, a former ambassador to the Dominican Republic, to liaise with the rebels. If Martin could broker a deal, Johnson wanted to have enough troops to make it stick, so he ordered the rest of the 82nd Airborne and the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade to the island. He also placed the 101st Airborne on alert.

By mid-May, the United States had 24,000 troops in place, including the 5th Logistics Command, 15th Field Hospital, 503rd Military Police Battalion, 50th Signal Battalion, 218th Military Intelligence Detachment, 519th Military Intelligence Battalion, 1st Psychological Warfare Battalion, 42nd Civil Affairs Company and 7th Special Forces Group. In addition, the Air Force moved fighter and reconnaissance elements to Ramey. All told, some 40,000 U.S. troops supported the operation.

Martin convinced the warring factions to sign something resembling a cease-fire, and both sides agreed to ask the Organization of American States (OAS) for assistance ending the conflict. An OAS-backed peacekeeping force included U.S., Brazilian, Honduran, Paraguayan, Nicaraguan, Costa Rican and Salvadoran troops.

As the situation cooled down, each warring faction declared its own president. And then things began to heat up again.

Kiser recalls two rebel P-51 Mustangs trying to break the blockade that divided the rebel force by strafing U.S. positions. “We all dove for cover as

they flew over us,” he explains. “Battalion sent up more jeeps with 50-calibers and M60 machine guns to assist us. When the planes came in again, they dove and opened up on us, we all fired back. The first plane broke out in smoke and crashed into the mountains behind us. The second plane was smoking too, but managed to turn back out to the bay, where the pilot bailed out.”

With rebel forces attacking, and food riots bubbling up north of the LOC, U.S. officials on the ground decided to respond militarily. But the White House was worried about escalation. So Johnson dispatched yet another team of negotiators to press a diplomatic solution.

That didn’t stop Loyalist troops from taking action north of the LOC. Loyalist operations weakened the rebels, but when Loyalist forces tried to use aircraft to deliver perhaps a knockout blow, Washington ordered U.S. troops to block them from doing so.

In mid-June, rebel forces attacked a U.S.-Brazilian position with mortars and rockets. The 82nd answered with everything it could, triggering America’s bloodiest battle in Operation Power Pack – 31 U.S. casualties, including three killed. U.S. troops were poised to crush the enemy, but again Washington intervened.

By August, both sides agreed to an “act of reconciliation” paving the way for a provisional government. In the months that followed, U.S. and OAS forces disarmed various factions, rounded up leaders from both sides for exile and turned back yet another attempted coup.

The last U.S. units left the Dominican Republic in September 1966. Forty-seven Americans were killed and 172 wounded during the operation.

PREVIEWS Power Pack achieved Johnson’s objectives – protecting U.S. citizens, stabilizing the nation, preventing a communist takeover – arguably in spite of his decisions. His micromanagement foreshadowed his handling of Vietnam.

U.S. forces displayed a remarkable mix of restraint, flexibility and skill – switching back and forth from combat to peacekeeping, delivering food one day and hunting snipers the next, completing the mission despite straitjacket ROE, and helping the Dominican Republic through a nightmare. As Yates discovered, a common scrawl of graffiti around Santo Domingo during Power Pack read, “Yankee go home – and take me with you.” ☰

Alan W. Dowd is a contributing editor for The American Legion Magazine.

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WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

BY J.J. MONTANARO



Know your Medicare deadlines, so you don't end up with higher premiums or coverage gaps.

Media Bakery

Remember the simplicity of signing up for Selective Service? You hit 18, you filled out the paperwork, and bam! You were done.

It's a shame it can't be that easy to deal with Medicare and health coverage.

A mountain of deadlines, enrollment periods and windows of opportunity affect how and where you get your care – and how much you pay for it. Miss these deadlines and you could experience coverage gaps, miss the chance to update your plan and end up digging deeper – sometimes much deeper – into your wallet.

Initially, you'll have to decide whether Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan works best for you. But as you'll see, the decision isn't permanent. If you opt for Original Medicare, you may want to add a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy to cover some of the costs not covered by Medicare.

In either case, you'll need suitable coverage for prescription drugs – either included as part of your Medicare Advantage plan or by enrolling in a separate Medicare prescription drug plan (Part D). Of course, if you retired from the military, you'll have access to TRICARE for Life, but to use that program you must still sign up for Medicare parts A and B.

So if you're contemplating the future, evaluating where you stand or looking to make a change to your coverage, here's an attempt to simplify the deadlines and enrollment periods associated with Medicare:

AUTOMATIC MEDICARE ENROLLMENT Generally, if you're receiving Social Security or Railroad Retirement Board benefits, on the first day of the month you turn 65 you'll be automatically enrolled in Medicare parts A and B.

MEDICARE INITIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD If you aren't automatically brought on board, you can sign up during the seven-month window that begins three months before the month you turn 65. The window closes at the end of the month three months after the month you turn 65. If you miss this sign-up and are not eligible for a special enrollment period, you will pay the price in the form of higher premiums for the rest of your life. You don't want to miss this one.

SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD If your coverage through an employer ends, you generally have an eight-month period to sign up for Medicare without a premium penalty. Other events can also trigger a special enrollment period. For example, you could move out of an area covered by your Medicare Advantage plan,

participate in a plan that is sanctioned or terminated by Medicare or return to the United States from a foreign country. Check **Medicare.gov** for the details on your specific situation.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD (JAN. 1-MARCH 31) If you missed your initial signup and weren't eligible for a special enrollment period, you can sign up for Medicare during the General Enrollment Period. Your coverage becomes effective July 1. Again, you must pay a permanent 10 percent premium penalty for each full 12-month period you waited to sign up.

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD (OCT. 15-DEC. 7) You don't need to sign up annually, but during this period you can change prescription drug plans and change or sign up for a Medicare Advantage plan. All changes are effective Jan. 1.

MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT OPEN ENROLLMENT

If you choose to use Original Medicare and supplement the coverage with Medicare Supplement Insurance, there's yet another enrollment period. This one begins when you turn 65 and enroll in Medicare Part B, and it lasts an additional five months. **Note:** there is no underwriting during this open enrollment period. Although Medicare Supplement policies offer services in accordance with plan names, prices can vary, so it could pay to shop around.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE DISENROLLMENT

PERIOD (JAN. 1-FEB. 14) Each year, you have an opportunity to leave your Medicare Advantage plan by switching back to Original Medicare and signing up for a stand-alone prescription drug plan. If you make this move, you may also want to consider a Medicare Supplement policy.

Clearly, Medicare isn't as simple as signing up and forgetting about it. Check out all the information available at **Medicare.gov**, and mark these dates on your calendar so you can time your moves. ☺

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA Financial Planning Services, one of the USAA family of companies. USAA is The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services.

HAVE MEDICARE QUESTIONS? CALL USAA

For each new USAA member who purchases any product, the company contributes funds to American Legion programs. Join online at www.usaa.com/legion or call toll-free **1-800-292-8069**.

FILM

Marvel's 'Avengers' includes cameos by Legionnaires

Legendary superhero creator Stan Lee enjoys cameo performances and has been seen in many movies based on his comic characters, including "X-Men," "Hulk" and "Fantastic Four."

In "Avengers: Age of Ultron," Lee plays a veteran who thinks he can handle a shot of Thor's special Asgardian brew during a party at Avengers Tower that includes American Legion members wearing their caps.

"I'm going to start referring to them as supporting roles," Lee jokes. "I understand that Robert Downey Jr. (Iron Man) is very worried."

In the second scene, fellow veterans carry out a muttering Lee after he sips Thor's drink. Lee is an Army Signal Corps veteran and member of Hollywood Post 43.

Joe Sinnott, artist and inker on "Fantastic Four," shares the cameo. He's a Navy veteran who served in the Pacific during World War II.

"If you pick any war movie – 'Born on the Fourth of July,' 'Forrest Gump,' 'Saving Private Ryan' – you'll see Legion caps in different scenes," says Terry Duddy, Post 43 adjutant.

— Michael Hjelmstad



Photo courtesy Keven Freedman

VERBATIM

Our warriors' sacrifice is not cheapened because people in suits couldn't hold on to what those in camo gained.

Semir Muratovic, who served with the 2nd Battalion 23rd Marines in Ramadi in 2009. In a *Washington Post* op-ed, the former infantry rifleman acknowledged veterans' anger at the fall of the Iraqi city to the Islamic State in May. "While every place our warriors have died is sacred to us, we cannot build and protect a shrine everywhere they fell," Muratovic wrote. "That doesn't mean their sacrifices lose value."



Photo by Andy Romey

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

'Spirit of '45' rides into Indianapolis

E. Bruce Heilman, longtime chancellor at the University of Richmond in Virginia and Marine Corps veteran of World War II, has trekked 6,000 miles across 20 states on his motorcycle to raise awareness of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. On May 17, the Legionnaire stopped in Indianapolis for a wreath-laying ceremony at the downtown World War II memorial.

When Heilman arrived at the base of the semi-circular granite memorial, he was greeted by 10 local veterans who had also served in the Pacific theater. They exchanged hugs and handshakes while bonding over stories from a war they fought seven decades ago.

"No one really understands it unless they were there and engaged," Heilman said. "We all understand each other. We're blood buddies."

Heilman's 34-day journey ended in Washington, D.C., where he acted as grand marshal of the World War II section of the National Memorial Day Parade. He started his trip in Virginia at the end of April and rode west to San Diego, where as an 18-year-old he completed basic training.

Buglers played "Taps" as Heilman and another Okinawa veteran laid a wreath at the memorial, which honors more than 12,500 U.S. troops killed at Okinawa as well as all who made the supreme sacrifice during World War II. Several Gold Star families also attended.

"We're celebrating the lives of those who died in battle," said Heilman, a member of American Legion Post 186 in Midlothian, Va. "We are saying to the world, 'This is an important date, and you ought to acknowledge it and be proud of your country and be proud of the guys who died saving your country.'"

Called the "Spirit of '45 Ride," Heilman's trip concluded at Post 177 in Fairfax, Va. From there, he joined the Legion Riders in their Run to the Thunder ride to Rolling Thunder, the annual Memorial Day weekend motorcycle ride.

— Andy Romey



Wikimedia Commons

"It was the spirit of liberty which gave us our armed strength and which made our men invincible in battle. We now know that the spirit of liberty, the freedom of the individual and the personal dignity of man are the strongest and toughest forces in the world."

President Harry S. Truman
September 1, 1945

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SPRING MEETINGS

Key resolutions of the 2015 Spring Meetings

FINANCE

- 1 Change Marketing Committee to Marketing Commission
- 4 Recommend to national convention that annual dues to National Headquarters increase by \$5
- 7 Accept three-year grant from Samsung to increase recognition of Samsung American Legion Scholars, enhance program

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

- 3 Amend eligibility terminology for American Legion Auxiliary to refer to "direct and adopted female descendants"
- 18 Membership credit to departments for transferring first- and second-year DMS members into local posts

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

- 22 Reinstate enrollment of Priority Group 8g veterans into VA patient enrollment system



Photo by Lucas Carter

We support the program as long as veterans need access to that care. However, we believe in the long-term existence of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

National Commander Mike Helm

on VA's Choice Card program, which allows veterans to seek private medical care at VA's expense in some circumstances



Photo by Lucas Carter

NEC encourages collaboration with post-9/11 veterans groups

The National Executive Committee is calling on American Legion posts and departments to embrace and collaborate with post-9/11 veterans groups, namely Team Rubicon, The Mission Continues, Student Veterans of America and Team Red, White & Blue. Introduced by the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee and passed by the NEC, Resolution 20 encourages posts and departments to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with the organizations' local branches.

Team Rubicon combines the experience and skills of U.S. military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams. The Mission Continues helps veterans transition into civilian life through volunteering and community outreach, while Team Red, White & Blue connects veterans to their communities through physical and social activities. SVA works in support of student veterans.

Also at the NEC, new donations topped National Commander Mike Helm's fundraising goal of \$4 million for American Legion charities: more than \$34,000 for Operation Comfort Warriors, more than \$21,000 for the National Emergency Fund, and a whopping \$128,000 for the Child Welfare Foundation courtesy Sons of The American Legion.

"I think setting the goal and opening all the charities to the entire American Legion Family put everybody in that spirit-of-giving mode," Helm said. "Not only was it coming together as a family to raise money for American Legion charities, but also an individual, personal competition between departments or posts, Auxiliary units, SAL squadrons and Legion Riders chapters."

Quilts of Valor 'day of service'

Volunteers organized a Quilts of Valor event at Indianapolis' Sheraton City Centre during the Spring Meetings. Quilts of Valor provides handmade quilts to wounded servicemembers and veterans recovering in military and VA medical facilities, as well as veterans of all eras. Six quilts were assembled, with help from more than 100 Legion Family members.

Ann Rehbein, a past president of the Department of Iowa Auxiliary, organized the event with Kathy Wheeler, wife of American Legion National Adjutant Dan Wheeler.

Past National Commander Joe Frank sewed for the first time. "For a wounded warrior, I'll do that," he said. "And I didn't lose a finger."



Photo by Lucas Carter

CAREERS

The changing landscape of corporate recruiting



THE JOB FRONT

BY WENDY S. ENELOW

Companies are changing how they recruit, and that's great news for job seekers.

Gerry Crispin and Mark Mehler of CareerXroads are leading the charge to reinvent and improve the recruitment processes of companies nationwide.

They've interviewed 165,000 candidates applying at 175 companies to learn what works, why and how. Only a small percentage of the 165,000 were actually hired, yet all took time to complete the 30-minute survey.

Results indicate that there are four things these leading-edge companies have in common regarding their recruitment practices:

- They actively seek feedback and listen to their candidates.
- They set expectations so candidates know how their recruitment process works.
- Every candidate gets the opportunity to showcase his or her skills, knowledge and experience in one way or another.
- They create measures of effectiveness to improve their accountability.

Hand in hand with their research is Talent Board's annual Candidate Experience Awards, recognizing companies that are true innovators in recruitment and committed to strengthening the candidate experience.

Here's a sampling of some of those companies and their new solutions:

- NBCUniversal hosts "Tech Talk" every Tuesday and "Ask the Experts" every Wednesday.
- Accenture developed a mobile interview app for candidates to better prepare for interviews.
- Genentech requires all candidates to take interview training to even out the playing field.
- RMS hosts a chat room that encourages people to "bring honest questions" so they can "provide honest answers."
- Intel created a candidate care team to build core relationships between their internal recruiters and job seekers.

Align yourself with companies that care about their candidates, and your job search will be stronger, faster and a more positive experience.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of *"Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions"* and *"Expert Résumés for Career Changers."*



Dave Beauchemin is too young to vote, but not too young to fight. He spent his 19th birthday hunting guerrillas in the silent jungles around Danang. For a report on fresh youth thrown into a dirty war, turn the page.

Photo courtesy Margaret Bobb

CENTENNIAL

Post 32, Longmont, Colo.

The post home of John Harold Buckley Post 32 of Longmont, Colo. – which, chartered in September 1919, is almost as old as The American Legion itself – is a treasure trove of historical items, many donated by post members past and present. Among them is a miniature replica UH-1 helicopter donated by Past Post Commander Greg McMahon, who flew a Huey in Vietnam. Willis Corcoran, a past historian for Post 32 and Vietnam-era veteran, created and maintains display cases for the pieces.

Share your post's legacy

Upload stories, photos and videos of your post's history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration website.

www.legion.org/centennial

SCOUTING



Nebraska teen named Legion's Eagle Scout of the Year

Ethan Copple, a junior at Elkhorn South High School in Elkhorn, Neb., is The American Legion's 2015 Eagle Scout of the Year. He will receive a \$10,000 scholarship.

Aware that the Korean War is often called "the forgotten war," and concerned that Elkhorn did not have a monument honoring Korean War veterans, Copple initiated and led efforts to build a Korean War memorial in Douglas County. A member of Boy Scout Troop 375, he raised the money and purchased the necessary supplies to build a 5-foot granite monument.

Local American Legion and VFW posts contributed funds to help Copple complete his project. He plans to attend college and serve in the Air National Guard, followed by an Air Force commission.

The Legion also named three runners-up: Michael James Parker of Mayville, N.Y., Jacob Kelley of Cottage Grove, Wis., and Braeden Benedict of Rancho Palos Verde, Calif. Each received a \$2,500 scholarship.

If You Worked Around Gaskets or Packing Containing Asbestos

The Garlock Bankruptcy May Affect Your Rights.

Certain Personal Injury Claims Must be Filed by October 6, 2015

There is a bankruptcy involving claims about exposure to asbestos-containing gasket and packing products. Garlock Sealing Technologies LLC, The Anchor Packing Company, and Garrison Litigation Management Group, Ltd. (“Debtors”) have filed a plan of reorganization to restructure their business and pay claims.

The products (with names like Garlock, Blue-Gard, Gylon, and Flexseal) were used in places where steam, hot liquid or acids moved through pipes, including industrial and maritime settings.

Who is Affected by the Garlock Bankruptcy?

Your rights may be affected if you:

- Worked with or around Garlock asbestos-containing gaskets or packing, or any other asbestos-containing product for which Debtors are responsible, or
- Have a claim now or in the future against the Debtors for asbestos-related disease caused by any person’s exposure to asbestos-containing products.

Even if you have not yet been diagnosed with any disease or experienced any symptoms, your rights may be affected. The Court has appointed a Future Claimants’ Representative (“FCR”) to represent the rights of these future claimants. Future claimants do not need to file a claim at this time.

What Does the Plan Provide?

The Plan is the result of a settlement agreement between the FCR, the Debtors, and the Debtors’ parent company. The Plan proposes to use \$357.5 million to pay, in full, all pending and future asbestos claims against Garlock and Garrison. If necessary, up to \$132 million in additional funding will be provided. If the Plan is approved, you will no longer be able to file claims directly against the Debtors or affiliated companies. If you have claims only against Anchor, you are not expected to recover

anything, as that company has no assets and will be dissolved.

Who Must File a Personal Injury Claim?

You must file a claim by **October 6, 2015**, if you:

- Have a claim against Garlock or Garrison based on an asbestos-related injury diagnosed on or before August 1, 2014,
- Have not settled with the Debtors, and
- Filed a lawsuit against any other defendant or a claim against any asbestos trust as of August 1, 2014.

If you do not file a claim, you may lose your right to bring your claim in the future. Individuals diagnosed with disease after August 1, 2014 do not have to file a claim at this time, but may be able to vote or object to the Plan.

Who Can Vote on or Object to the Plan?

All identifiable asbestos claimants or their attorneys will receive the “Solicitation Package”. This includes the Plan, Voting Ballot, and other information. If you have not filed a claim yet, you can vote on the Plan by providing certified information about your claim, or making a motion to vote as described in the Solicitation Package available online or by calling the toll-free number.

You will need to vote on the Plan by **October 6, 2015**. The FCR will support and vote to accept the Plan on behalf of the future claimants. **You may also object to the Plan and the adequacy of the FCR’s representation of future claimants by October 6, 2015.**

When will the Court Decide on the Plan?

A hearing to consider confirmation of the Plan will begin at 10:00 a.m. ET on June 20, 2016, at the US Bankruptcy Court, Western District of North Carolina, 401 West Trade Street, Charlotte, NC 28202.



Air Force veteran Gordon Richardson seeks assistance for his disability rating at The American Legion's Veterans Benefits Center in Memphis, Tenn., on April 21. Photo by Andrea Morales

VETERANS BENEFITS

Hope, help at Legion VBCs

In April, The American Legion conducted Veterans Benefits Center (VBC) events in Asheville, N.C., and Memphis, Tenn., where Legion staff and service officers worked alongside staff from VA's Veterans Benefits Administration and Veterans Health Administration to expedite new or existing claims and appeals.

Since launching the VBC program in 2014, the Legion has helped veterans recover well over \$1 million in retroactive benefits. VBCs are open to all veterans and their families, regardless of Legion membership.

Individual success stories from the April VBCs include:

- Allen Greene, an Army veteran who was rated 100 percent on a claim that had been pending for 11 years.
- Jill Baker, an Army veteran who walked into the Asheville VBC rated at 70 percent and left rated at 100 percent with Chapter 35 benefits for her family.
- Michael Jordan, who served in the Army from 2003 to 2011, was rated at 80 percent service-connected. He left the Asheville VBC with a temporary 100 percent rating pending exams. "It's like a 300-pound weight ... off my shoulders," he said.
- Army veteran Hugh Wiggins, who drove more than 100 miles to resolve an unemployability claim he's had since 2008, was granted both the claim and retroactive compensation. "When you live on a fixed income, every extra penny helps," he said. "It's the best day of my life."
- Gordon Richardson, who served in the Air Force from 1971 to 1997, now expects nearly \$17,000 in back payments. His disability rating went from 80 to 90 percent.

Read the latest news about Legion VBCs:

 www.legion.org/headlines/veteransbenefits

ASK A SERVICE OFFICER

VA mental health care and gun rights



Q: Will I lose my guns, hunting license or permit to carry if I receive VA mental health care?

A: No. Veterans are not required to give up their Second Amendment rights or firearms to get VA mental health care. Only veterans rated incompetent by VA – which means they are determined to be unable to manage their VA funds – are subject to such provisions.

When VA determines that a veteran is incompetent, the agency is required to report it. The term "incompetent," for VA purposes, is reserved for an adult who is deemed unable to manage his or her own financial affairs.

The purpose of VA's Fiduciary Program is to protect veterans and beneficiaries who are unable to manage their VA benefits, through the appointment and oversight of a fiduciary.

The determination that you are unable to manage your VA benefits does not affect your non-VA finances, or your right to vote or contract. You may also request to have your ability to manage your VA benefits be re-evaluated, or to have a new fiduciary appointed, at any time. If you wish a re-evaluation, submit your request in writing with any supporting medical evidence to the regional office of jurisdiction.

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act prohibits you from purchasing, possessing, receiving or transporting a firearm or ammunition if you have "been adjudicated as a mental defective or been committed to a mental institution."

In compliance with this act, VA reports the names of incompetent beneficiaries to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which then adds the names to a database called the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Gun dealers must check NICS for the name of a potential buyer before selling him or her a firearm. You may be fined and/or imprisoned if you knowingly violate this law. You may apply to VA for relief of prohibitions imposed by the law by submitting your request to the agency, which will determine whether such relief is warranted.

Find an American Legion service officer in your state:  www.legion.org/serviceofficers

Do you have a question for Department of Missouri Service Officer Tracy Davis about the claims process or veterans benefits in general? Send it to askso@legion.org.

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PERSONAL FINANCE



Six common credit score misconceptions

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

The world of credit and credit scoring is not without its myths. Here are a few I hear often while interacting with USAA members:

You must carry a balance to get the best credit score. Nope. To have a good score you must responsibly use credit, but that doesn't mean you need to carry a balance. In fact, part

of your score is based on the amount of credit you have available but aren't using, so keep your credit card balances low. Zero is best, but aim for less than 20 percent of your total available credit limit.

Closing old accounts will sink your score. A long credit history is important, but a closed account won't just disappear from your record. It will reflect on your score for years to come. On the other hand, closing an account, old or new, could immediately hurt your all-important utilization ratio (total debt divided by total available credit).

Checking your credit report is a downer. Actually, it's a good thing. Get in the habit of keeping an eye on your credit

report and score. Look for fraudulent activity and dispute errors. When you check your score, it's considered a soft inquiry, similar to a background check. It won't ding your score like applying for a loan or credit card will.

More accounts mean a lower score. Not exactly. Applying for several lines of credit and loans within a short period can hurt your score, but using a mix of different types of loans is actually good for your rating.

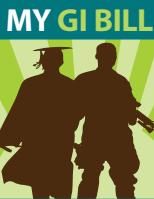
More income means more score. What you earn is not even part of the formula for determining a credit score. I've worked with plenty of people with lots of income and a poor grip on their debt. So while a better debt-to-income ratio may improve the chance you'll get a loan, it's not reflected in your credit score.

Your score is your score. You actually have a lot of scores, and it's much more likely they're different than the same.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

www.legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

EDUCATION



MY GI BILL
VETERANS & EDUCATION
BY VALERIE HEFFNER

Partial GI Bill benefits for pre-9/11 vets

Q: *I spent most of my military years in the Marine Corps Reserve and was called up for Desert Storm. I understand certain educational benefits may be available to me because of that. Currently, my employer will reimburse me up to 65 percent for the university-level courses for which I am currently enrolled. Could GI Bill benefits possibly cover the remaining fees?*

A: If you served 90 days to six months consecutively, you may be eligible for 40 percent of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits under Chapter 33. Generally, you may receive up to 36 months of entitlement. You will be eligible for benefits for 15 years. To sign up for your benefits, go to www.benefits.va.gov.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona. askvalerie@legion.org

VERBATIM

We have a situation that is like Enron accounting. And the public doesn't want to hear about it.

Laurence Kotlikoff, co-author of "Get What's Yours," a *New York Times* best-seller about how to maximize claiming Social Security retirement benefits. He wants the Social Security Administration to calculate unfunded obligations using the "infinite horizon" model, which accounts for funding after 75 years. Under this system, SSA's projected unfunded liabilities would be \$24.9 trillion (instead of the \$10.6 trillion projected in 2088). Source: CNBC

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Photo by Lucas Carter

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Get the most out of a visit to Baltimore

Callaway Transportation, Inc. (CTI) is the official tour operator for The American Legion's 87th National Convention in Baltimore, and is offering several different options.

Program 1 – Museums (\$10/day), Aug. 27-29 and 31. Outbound departures only from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., returns only from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Museum tours each day from Friday to Wednesday (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), except Sunday. Attendees pay for admission at each museum.

■ **Museum Route A** includes stops at the American Visionary Art Museum (\$14), Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine (\$7), the Baltimore Museum of Industry (\$9) and the Maryland Science Center (\$18).

■ **Museum Route B** includes stops at National Aquarium (\$29.95), the Baltimore Civil War Museum at President Street Station (\$3), the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History & Culture (\$6), Star-Spangled Banner Flag House & 1812 Museum (\$7) and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum (\$16).

■ **Museum Route C** includes stops at the Baltimore Museum of Art (free), the Maryland Museum of Military History (free) and the Walters Art Museum (free).

Program 2 – Local Shopping (\$10), Aug. 29 and 31, Sept. 1-2. Outbound departures only from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., returns only from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Stops include the Gallery Mall/Inner Harbor, Harbor East and Fell's Point.

Program 3 – Guided Tour of Baltimore (\$30), Aug. 27-29 and 31. Three hours.

A tour registration desk will be open at the Baltimore Convention Center. Convention registration badges are required on all tours.

Register online for a tour:

www.legion.org/convention

Click on "2015 Convention Information" and "Tours"

BOAT CRUISES/SAILING

Several options for cruises or sailing excursions are available in Baltimore, from harbor cruises to a seaborne pirate-themed tour of the city's maritime history. baltimore.org/baltimore-boat-cruises

LEGION FAMILY BASEBALL NIGHT

On Aug. 31, the Baltimore Orioles will take on the Tampa Bay Rays at Oriole Park at Camden Yards American Legion Family Night. The first pitch is at 7:05 p.m., to be thrown by 2014 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain Matthew Walsh. Order tickets by July 1; offered ticket prices will not be available at the box office.

www.orioles.com/tix/americanlegion

LEGION FAMILY FOOTBALL NIGHT

On Aug. 29, the Baltimore Ravens will host the Washington Redskins at M&T Bank Stadium on American Legion Family Night. Kickoff is at 7:30 p.m. Orders are due to the Ravens ticket office via mail, fax or phone by June 30 to guarantee a ticket.

www.legion.org/convention/resources

BAND CONTEST RETURNS

After a hiatus, the competitive Concert Band Contest returns to the Legion's national convention. The contest – scheduled for 1 p.m. Aug. 29 in Rooms 314-317 of the Baltimore Convention Center – will also include a new exhibition class.

The Color Guard Contest will be at 5 p.m. Aug. 28, in Swing/Hall F, Level 100 of the convention center.



Photo by Tom Strattman

TANEY WREATH-LAYING

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Taney* – a historic ship with a berth in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, not far from the convention center – will be the site of a "reclaim ceremony" wreath-laying by Coast Guard veterans and crew at 11:30 a.m. Aug. 30. The public is invited.

GETTING AROUND

Baltimore is a very connected city, especially in the area around the convention center, close to the Inner Harbor. Explore all the different transportation options, from online guaranteed parking to travel by rail, wheel or water. www.legion.org/convention/resources



Leroy Davis, commander of Fletcher-McCollister Post 135, arrives at the post's American Legion birthday ball in Phenix City, Ala., on March 21. Photo by Bartram Nason

POST ACTIVITIES

Alabama post knows how to throw a Legion birthday party

Every year of his 20-year military career, Leroy Davis looked forward to the annual Navy birthday ball. Why not do something similar, the Alabama Legionnaire thought, to mark The American Legion's birthday?

For the second year, Fletcher-McCollister Post 135 in Phenix City – where Davis is post commander – hosted an American Legion birthday ball. On March 21, nearly 100 people celebrated with a buffet dinner, an American Legion birthday cake, music and dancing at Marriott's Courtyard Hotel in Phenix City. The post also honored two 70-year members: Carson D. Mitchell and Daniel M. Parish.

"We were glad to have (the Navy ball) and glad to go to it," Davis recalled. "(It was) a sense of pride, and I felt that's what we need to do: make people proud to be in The American Legion and proud to help other veterans. The community needs to know that we are here and what we do."

Central High School's Navy Junior ROTC presented the colors before an audience that included local government officials, including Phenix City Mayor Eddie Lowe.

"The reason why (the relationship) is so strong is because of the veterans," Lowe said. "If it had not been for people giving up themselves, (paying) the ultimate price, we could not be able to have this event here. It's important we remember that veterans are mission-critical in this country."

Department of Georgia Legionnaire Dale Barnett, leading candidate for 2015-2016 national commander, was the guest speaker. He shared his story of how Georgia Boys State influenced his decision to attend the U.S. Military Academy.

"As we move forward to our 100th anniversary, I hope we're looking at (similar events) all across the nation with departments and posts coming together," he

said. "To survive and be as vibrant as The American Legion is something worthy of celebrating."

Georgia Department Commander Randy Goodman said the birthday ball is a great opportunity for the Legion to brag a bit. "We rarely tell our story," he said. "This is a perfect way to do it. When we get together at events like this, the story unfolds."

– Steve B. Brooks



Dale Barnett of Georgia, leading candidate for 2015-2016 national commander, congratulates two 70-year members of Fletcher-McCollister Post 135. Photo by Bartram Nason

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After losing his son, Matt, to cancer, Barry Blount of Pelham, Ala., started an American Legion post named for his son, who was an Army veteran and Legionnaire. Photo by Lucas Carter

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

Father honors son's memory with post in his name

After one of his chemo sessions, Matt Blount told his father he had to go meet a friend, Kyle Comfort. Even though Matt was weak from the treatment, Barry Blount knew his son was strong and strong-willed, so he let him go.

Little did his father know that Matt, who was battling Ewing's sarcoma, wasn't leaving to hang out with Comfort. Instead, he was leaving for Comfort's funeral. Matt rode his motorcycle as one of the escorts for his friend's service.

"I later asked him if that was a real smart thing to do," Barry remembers. "He said, 'Dad, he would have done the same thing for me.'"

That anecdote is typical of Army 2nd Lt. Matt Blount, who finally succumbed to cancer March 10, 2012 – three days after the 30-year-old realized his dream of an Army commission.

With a heavy heart and an unrelenting will, Barry Blount focused his efforts on honoring and remembering his son and hero. His efforts turned into reality in September 2014 when Matthew Blount American Legion Post 555 was formally certified.

"I've tried to keep his legacy alive," Barry says. "Action speaks louder than words. You don't have to have a Ph.D. to know if a person is sincere or not. Apparently I made my point. And the outpouring of support has been unbelievable."

Within a week, the post had 30 members. By March, the

post boasted 70 members and was launching youth programs in Matt's honor.

"The community showed lots of love and respect," says Barry, who is commander of Post 555. "You wonder if you are worthy of it. When we started out we were trying to give back to our community, our veterans. And we wanted to open doors, especially to the youth. It was what Matt was all about. That's Matt's fuse. I can't take credit for it."

Passing credit along to someone else is in the Blount blood.

A.J. Blount learned many life lessons from his older brother. "Matt wouldn't take credit for his own actions," he says, describing his brother's time as a 21-year-old combat medic. "He would say, 'Oh, it wasn't me; it was the guy next to me. I showed up and did a few things.' That was Matt's mentality, even though he did 100 percent of the work."

Matt demonstrated leadership, always finding the positive in every person. A.J. knows that firsthand.

"I wouldn't be here, wearing these captain bars, if it were not for him," he says. "I was fine being enlisted and going that route. My brother told me that he saw more potential in me. He saw more drive in me than I saw in myself."

It was A.J. who administered the oath at Matt's hospital bedside as tears flowed.

Even when his brother was doing chemo, A.J. says he was

doing his homework and still going to class, managing as best he could.

"He never gave up," A.J. recalls. "When the doctors told him he had three months to live, he went through the seven stages of grief quickly. He said, 'It is what it is. I can't do anything about it. It's cancer.' He battled it for over two years."

The Blounts' church – the First Baptist Church of Pelham – honored Matt's memory with a special stained-glass window. With an active Legion post and such community tributes, Matt's legacy will endure.

"We have a simple message of giving back," Barry says. "That was related to what Matt's legacy was all about. He was always taking care of his soldiers, and it was what was instilled in him at this church and the way they were raised."

—Henry Howard

Watch a video about Matt Blount:
www.legion.org/legiontv
 Search "Honor & Remembrance"



Matt – Boy Scout, veteran, Legionnaire – is honored at the family church.

Photo by Lucas Carter

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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**.

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**. Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

1st Mobile Cbt Grp (AACs/AFCS), Branson, MO, 9/24-27, Larry Wright, (417) 718-4678, wtatc43@yahoo.com; **4th Ftr Interceptor Wing 334th, 335th & 336th Ftr Interceptor Sqdns & Support Personnel (Korea)**, San Diego, 10/21-25, Carlo Romano, (301) 593-2266; **8th AF Hist Society, Omaha, NE**, 10/14-18, Debra Kujawa, (912) 748-8884, managingdirector@8thafhs.org; **15th RSM/6922nd Sqdn USAFSS (Korean War)**, North Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/11-14, Joe Setzer, (910) 579-6581; **31st TFW (Tuy-Hoa AB, Vietnam, All Units & Years)**, Rapid City, SD, 9/10-12, Paul Goodrich, (812) 597-4553; **71st Aerial Port Sqdn (Langley AFB, VA)**, Hampton, VA, 8/15-16, Gwendolyn Smith, (757) 537-7406, justacutiepie4@aol.com; **90th Strat Recon Wing, Kansas City, MO**, 9/16-21, Chuck Hale, (785) 865-5794, chucknhale@gmail.com; **93rd Bomb Grp (H)(VH)(M) (1942-1952) & Castle AFB 389th Bomb Grp, 44th Bomb Grp, 2nd Air Div & 15th AF B-24 Grps**, Omaha, NE, 10/1-5, Jim Guddal, (866) 694-9058, jguddal@yahoo.com; **410th Bomb Wing & All Associated Units, 62nd FIS & 87th FIS, K.I. Sawyer AFB, MI**, 7/10-12, Clyde Sinclair, (616) 822-9627, csmith1120@charter.net; **GEELA-MDA-EI, Oklahoma City, 10/1-4**, Darrell Getchell, (405) 732-8789, g_getchell@cox.net; **USAF Vets, Caribbean/Bahamas Cruise, TX**, 4/23-5/1, Jill Etter, (210) 508-9953, usafveteranscruise@gmail.com

ARMY

2nd Armd Div Assn, Killeen, TX, 9/30-10/4, Barbara Denny, (972) 803-6134, barbara.denny@ogletreedeakins.com; **2nd Cav Assn (All Yrs)**, Valley Forge, PA, 10/1-4, Tim White, (717) 475-6406, twhite@guidonleader.com; **4th Bn 9th Inf Rgt Manchu**, Norfolk, VA, 9/16-19, Bob Lannon, (317) 745-4287, bobl99@hotmail.com; **4th Msl Bn 28th Arty**, Branson, MO, 10/6-10, John Smith, (954) 579-6511, jsbs2658@comcast.net; **11th Abn Div Assn**, Branson, MO, 9/14-18, Kenneth D Sly, (785) 823-8352, aksly@hotmail.com; **28th Inf "Black Lions,"** Las Vegas, 10/13-16, James Shepherd, (480) 515-2765, shepherdretired@aol.com; **31st Eng Bn Assn**, San Antonio, 10/1-4, Bob Powers, (617) 899-3445, powers.bob@gmail.com; **92nd Assault Heli Co**, Minneapolis, 9/10-12, Dave Skoog, (320) 582-3345, dewhutch@yahoo.com; **114th Inf 44th Div (WWII)**, Sioux Falls, SD, 9/11-12, Curtis Eggers, (605) 332-0718, paevenson@aol.com; **170th Avn Co Assault Heli "Bikinis,"** St. Louis, 10/23-25, Henry Wirthner, (847) 546-7186; **179th ASHC/402nd, Reno, NV**, 10/16-18, Stan Neckermann, (314) 487-5384, sn1643@sbcglobal.net; **398th AAA AW Bn (Korea)**, Branson, MO, 10/5-7, Arlie Schemmer, (636) 228-4474; **549th MP Co (Panama, 1972-1975)**, Savannah, GA, 9/30-10/4, Tony Bianchi, (518) 399-7067, abiancha@nycap.rr.com; **709th MP BN (Germany, All Eras)**, Erlanger, KY, 9/10-12, Louise Stack, (414) 764-0365, kilostack@att.net; **864th Eng Bn Pacemakers - All Eras, Spouses, Mbrs & Friends (WWII-2015)**,

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MARINES

2nd Bn 3rd Mar 3rd Div (Vietnam), Las Vegas, 9/9-12, Art Ward, artw47@aol.com; **3/10 & 2nd 155 Howitzer Bn "The Forgotten Battalion" (WWII)**, Wichita, KS, 9/17-19, Mike Thomas, (316) 841-5809, mthomas@excelii.com; **ANGLICO Assn**, San Antonio, 11/6-8, Joe Luque, (661) 725-3415, jluque@sbcglobal.net; **Avn Logistics Mar, The Villages**, FL, 10/8-10, Don Davis, (321) 978-5147, greyegl@ec.rr.com; **FLC/FLSG-A Truck Co (Vietnam)**, Orange Beach, AL, 9/17-20, John Kane, (251) 987-1490, johnkane@gulfotel.com; **Golf 2-7 Vietnam Vets Assn**, Dillard, GA, 8/25-30, Ray Taylor, (352) 978-9746, rapidray2@aol.com; **Mar Air Grps (WWII-2015)**, Branson, MO, 9/16-19, James Jordan, (417) 535-4945, james.m.jordan@hughes.net; **NAS Bermuda Mar Det/Bks (All Yrs)**, San Antonio, 10/25-29, Dennis McDonald, (763) 473-3458, d.mcdonald82575@comcast.net; **VMFA-542**, San Diego, 7/28-8/2, John Slawinski, (626) 963-3441, jw.lawslawinski@verizon.net; **VMO-2 Hueys (1965-1968)**, Pensacola, FL, 9/10-15, Terry Bowman, (301) 331-7398, t.bowman@myactv.net

NAVY

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Brunswick, ME, 7/24-26, Jon Jewett, (603) 770-0715, jonjewett42@gmail.com; **Perkins DD 26/ DD 377/DDR 877**, Colorado Springs, CO, 9/9-13, Amy Kennan, (719) 205-9721, amykeenan83@msn.com; **Pocono AGC 16/LCC 16**, Chicago, 9/10-14, Jack Myers, (765) 453-9531, jmayers1064@aol.com; **Point Defiance LSD 31**, Bloomington, MN, 9/9-9, John Nicolosi, (978) 532-0717, pointdefiance@yahoo.com; **Richard L. Page DEG/FFG 5**, San Antonio, 9/24-27, Dale Kerkman, (262) 878-1714, kerkman1@aol.com; **Richmond K. Turner DLG/ CG 20**, Seattle, 10/1-4, Eric Miller, (610) 285-2358, teampa@aol.com; **Sea Fox SS 402**, Green Valley, AZ, 5/23-27, Joel Greenberg, (520) 393-8252, joelgreenberg804@yahoo.com; **Shenandoah AD 26**, New Orleans, 10/15-18, Thomas Durand, (203) 494-6661, tbdurand@att.net; **Tiger Co 447 (Boot Camp, 1966)**, Detroit, 7/11-14, James Maratta, (989) 652-6108, golddguy24@hotmail.com; **VP-23**, Brunswick, ME, 7/24-26, Jon Jewett, (603) 770-0715, jonjewett42@gmail.com

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Post 159, FL: Richard Biron
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IN SEARCH OF

1st Battle Grp 21st Inf & 2nd Battle Grp 28th Inf 24th Inf Div, 22nd Finance Co (Warner or Will Kaserne, Munich, Germany, Aug 1960-Feb 1963), Larry Seidenfeld, (209) 684-1393, lseidenfeld1@gmail.com
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30th Inf Rgt Heavy Mortar Co (Fort Benning, GA, 1953-1955), Dick Lester, (860) 887-7566, dicklester85@yahoo.com
36th FMS Parachute Riggers (Ubon, Thailand, 1970), Ralph Jones, whaler38@centurylink.net
93rd Eng Co Float Bridge (Leipheim & Nelligen, Germany, 1959-1960), Tom Colgan, (631) 586-0520
110th Trans Co (1967-1969), Lee Curtis, (937) 382-4685, lcurtis@cinci.rr.com
507th Eng Bn Depot Maint (Kaiserslautern, Germany & Toul, France, 1953-1955), Jerome Marah, (651) 398-2064, jamarah33@gmail.com
595th MPEG Co (Kojedo, Korea, 1950-1951), Tom Breeze, (480) 626-5755

Bennett DD 473 (SS John Sevier Rescue, Apr 6, 1943), Quentin Smith, 2300 Masonic Way #234, Forest Grove

Co 443 F Unit (Sampson Naval Base, Sept-Oct 1943), Oren Knapp, 77 Oneida St., Oneonta, NY 13820

Enterprise CVA(N) 65 Barber Shop (1964-1966), Jimmy Jones, (323) 497-6226, 45jj.jones@gmail.com

Sailfish SSR 572 Plank Owners Through 1960, Frank Dorchak, (518) 483-6272, ss572dbf@twcny.rr.com

TAPS

William H. Brader, Dept. of Washington. Dept. Cmdr. 1973-1974, Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activ. Cmte. Chmn. 1974-1977, Nat'l Sec. Cmssn. Nat'l Cmdr.'s Rep. 1984-1985 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1977-1983.

Alton H. Carpenter, Dept. of New York. Dept. Cmdr. 1981-1982, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1982-1983, Nat'l Historian 1976-1977, Nat'l Legis. Cmssn. Memb. 1986-2011 and Nat'l Legis. Cmssn. Nat'l Cmdr.'s Rep. 1977-1985.

Patricia C. Marso, Dept. of New York. Nat'l Children & Youth Cmssn. Region 2 Memb. 1995-2000 and Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2004-2011.

Thomas H. Naragon, Dept. of Maine. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1997-2001 and Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2004-2006.

Charles S. Smith, Dept. of New Hampshire. Dept. Cmdr. 2005-2006 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2000-2005.

Daniel S. Tenerowicz, Dept. of New York. Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 1983-2015.

Joseph M. Tomaino, Dept. of Massachusetts. Dept. Cmdr. 2003 and Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1983-2011.

Robert J. Wyman, Dept. of New Hampshire. Dept. Cmdr. 2002-2003, Nat'l Homeland Sec. & Civil Preparedness Cmte. Memb. 2003-2013, Nat'l Law and Order & Homeland Sec. Cmte. Memb. 2013-2015 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1996-2002.

Neil H. Zimmer, Dept. of Nebraska. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1988-1992, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Memb. 2013-2014, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2012-2013 and Nat'l American Legion Insurance Cmte. Memb. 1992-2012.

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The passerby joined the search, but after 15 minutes they hadn't found anything. "Where exactly did you trip?" he asked.

"About a block up the street."

"So why are we looking for it here?"

"The light's better here."

A TEENAGER with spiked hair, a nose ring and baggy trousers once confided to a friend, "I'm really more of a polo-shirt guy myself. But this stops my parents from dragging me everywhere with them."

TWO FISH are in a tank. One says to the other, "Can you drive this thing?"

A MAN who had spent all afternoon watching football on TV fell asleep. The next morning, his wife woke him up in his chair.

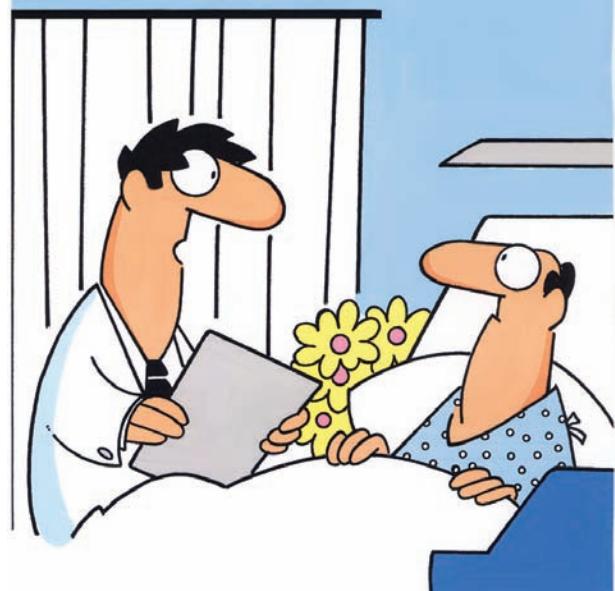
"It's 10 to 7," she said.

"Who's winning?" he asked.

DID YOU HEAR about the cowboy who got himself a daschund? Everyone kept telling him to get a long, little doggie.



"If I can get them to have babies, I'll be rich."



"Good news! Your insurance company says you're feeling much better!"



"The contract is binding. The super glue wasn't necessary."

A FATHER coming home from a day of golf was greeted by his young son.

"Daddy! Daddy! Did you win?" the boy asked.

"Well," the father replied, "in golf it doesn't matter so much who wins. But I got to hit that ball more times than anybody else out there!"

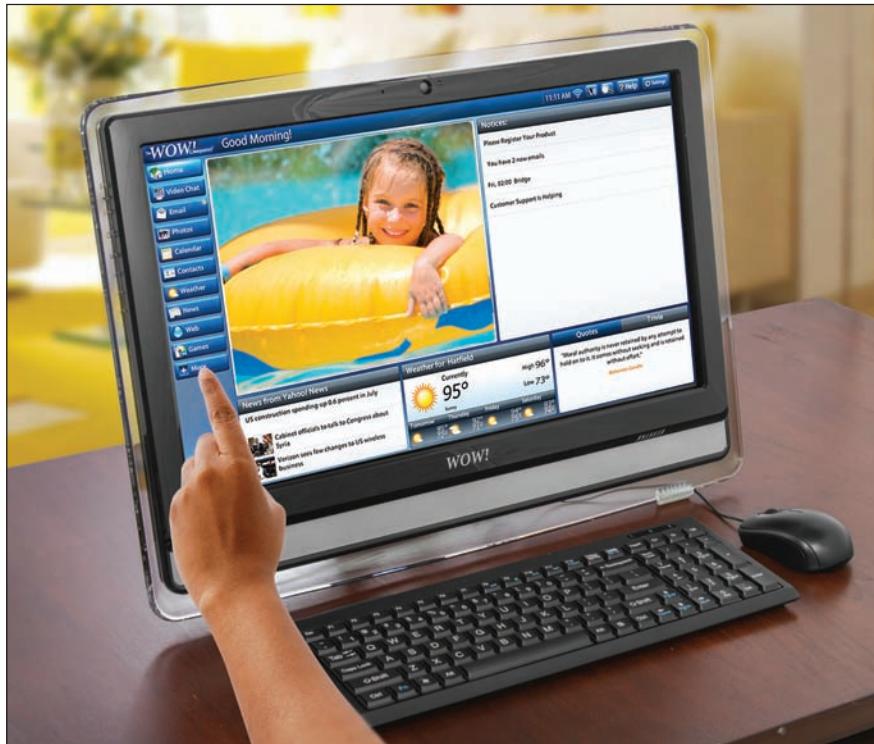
A YOUNG MAN was taking a grandfather clock to the shop for repairs. On a crowded street, he bumped into an older man and accidentally knocked several bundles from his arms.

"Darn hipsters!" the older man yelled. "Why can't you be like other people and wear a watch?"

A NEW SURVEY says 64 percent of Americans own a smartphone, which is interesting because in a related survey 100 percent of smartphones say they own an American." – *Jimmy Fallon*

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